APRIL 1997

THE UNESCO COURIER

THE BODY AND THE SELF

INTERVIEW
MARIO LUZI

HERITAGE
TE WAHIPOUNAMU (NEW ZEALAND)

ENVIRONMENT
GARDENS: A CULTURAL FLOWERING

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ENCOUNTERS

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cultural cross-fertilization. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.

"PLUVIOMAGICAL PRAYER" *1996, serigraphy and collage (40 x 30 cm) by Eduardo Gabriel Pepe*

This design by an Argentine artist features a two-headed serpent, a typical motif of the pre-Columbian Yocavil culture (850-1480 A. D.) of northeastern Argentina. A good omen associated with rain and prosperity, the serpent symbolizes lightning and water. The darker part of the design, extending over the edge of the rectangle, evokes past and future and the slow advance of humankind with its attendant fears and desires.

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Cover: A depiction of the "subtle body" with its network of wheels (*cakras*) and fibres (*nadis*), illustrating *pranayama*, the discipline of breathing in yoga, which is indispensable for spiritual development. © Romain Maitra, Paris

interview

Mario Luzi

Words, timely and timeless

Mario Luzi is an essayist, playwright and translator, but above all he is one of the greatest living Italian poets. His works have been translated into some thirty languages. Among those which have appeared in English are *For the baptism of our fragments* (Guernica, Montreal, 1992) and *After many years: selected poems* (Dedalus Press, Dublin, 1990). Here, Mario Luzi talks to Mauro Rosi about his life and work and the role of poetry today.

■ **You wrote your first poem at the age of nine. What do you remember about that time in your life?**

Mario Luzi: I was an ordinary child, and I took part wholeheartedly in the life of the community, even if I sometimes had interests that were not shared by all my chums. One day, when I was playing in the open air with the others, I felt the need to leave them and go home, so I could write that celebrated first poem to which you refer, and which I have since lost. That was how I experienced an almost physical need—a need to transfer the living element of the grass and the park where I was playing on to paper, into writing. I can still remember the theme of that first piece of poetic creation. At the time I was very impressed by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which of course I hadn't read, but which I knew about through a series of illustrated booklets (strip cartoons didn't yet exist). I was intrigued by the character of Dante and his journey—that mysterious adventure to forbidden places, where he judged and was judged—and wondered whether he had really deserved his fate.

■ **And after that initial experience?**

M. L.: I remember a poem I wrote about a volcano when I was about twelve. I must have heard about an eruption in Italy or somewhere, and my youthful imagination had been fired by that wondrous element which blazed forth from its hiding-place in the earth.

■ **And then...?**

M. L.: I wasn't very interested in the poems we were given to read. My teachers gave pride of place to moralistic poetry, chosen for didactic purposes, like Giusti's—not of course his ironical poems, but his "devout" and less brilliant work. I was far more drawn to the poetry of D'Annnnzio and Pascoli, which was modern for its time. I couldn't really understand it but I was interested in the way it broke away from the set models we were given at school. It was only later, when I was at high school, that I felt a real need to express myself in words. I wrote a great deal, mainly letters, almost all of which I have lost. I then gradually decided that I was going to devote my life to writing.

■ **You later became a university specialist in French poetry. How did your interest in that and in European poetry in general begin?**

M. L.: That was much later. First I became interested in philosophy and spent a long time studying it, almost to the point where it began to compete with poetry. I was around eighteen or twenty years old. Yet when I approached philosophy as a specific discipline, I got the feeling it was all rather—how shall I put it?—a will-o'-the-wisp. I was probably more interested in the myth of philosophy than in philosophy itself: I loved the wisdom of the Pre-Socratics, Plato and other philosophers of Antiquity. In other words, I preferred philosophy that established a relationship with truth and the human element to philosophy which saw itself as a process of self-correction. By that I mean the kind of finicky philosophy that restricts itself to what Leopardi ironically called "*rammendi*"—"darning" or "mending". At that time, Italian philosophy was above all orientated towards the latest manifestations of idealism, and that didn't suit me at all.

Poetry is an especially important way of approaching truth.

■ **Do you think that in a different cultural context you might have ended up as a philosopher rather than a poet?**

M. L.: I don't know. But I would certainly have been more responsive to philosophy. I think that in this respect my career is similar to Leopardi's. Although he was best known as a poet, he considered himself a philosopher but didn't like the philosophy of his time.

It was only late in life that I rediscovered philosophy, when I was asked by a magazine to take part in a discussion with Gianni Vattimo and Massimo Cacciari, philosophers who belong to what is known as the "weak thought" (*il pensiero debole*) school. This school, which was inspired by Martin Heidegger and Hans Georg Gadamer, regards language as the "house of being" and believes it plays an essential role in the process of the formation and recognition of truth. It recognizes the emotional roots of experience and therefore its own emotional and poetic sources. It holds that poetry, as a radical creation in and through language, is an especially important way of approaching truth.

Mario Luzi
in December 1996

© Unesco/Mauro Rosi

■ **This relationship with philosophy, especially with Heideggerian philosophy, is at one with the religious urge, with religious faith, which is a constant feature of your poetry.**

M. L.: Heidegger's philosophy does indeed attach great importance to the sacred. It constantly asks questions of theology—and of poetry too, notably Rilke's and Hölderlin's. . . .

■ **A hallmark of your generation was its belief in the ideal of the committed intellectual. For some, that involved a very direct form of commitment, and sometimes even activism in political parties. What was your experience of that eventful period, and what do you think of it with hindsight?**

L. M.: By way of an answer, I will refer you to a poem I wrote some thirty-four years ago, *Presso il Besenzio*. In it I describe a kind of meeting with the "committed", to whom I reply, poetically, by defining my own position. I tell them that although we are moving in the same direction my itinerary is less direct and longer than theirs; that I also have to heed values which transcend current events and are in a sense timeless; that my watch is regulated by more complicated mechanisms, which means that my time is not the same as theirs. You mentioned earlier the faith that drives my creation. I would simply add that the relationship and confrontation between time and the timeless is a constant element of my poetry.

Having said that, I approve of political commitment when it is ethically inspired and deeply motivated, not purely polemical. I've never liked the barricades, but—even though I have not committed myself to any political movement—I've always been very aware of the sufferings of people victimized by injustice and mindful of the relationship between power and freedom.

■ **The universality of poetry is nowadays taken for granted. But when one looks closely at the question of translation, it seems clear that the language barrier can sometimes be an insuperable obstacle to the wide circulation of a piece of writing. What's your position on this?**

M. L.: The language barrier complicates matters and is certainly a limitation. I realize that any ▶

interview

Mario Luzi

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translation is debatable, that the legitimacy of the choices made can always be questioned, and that translation is always to some extent inadequate or unfaithful. But no one, I'm glad to say, has ever been able to prevent translation from going on. And, anyway, surely the whole point of poetry is that it transcends its original context, overcomes the language barrier, and carries its message beyond the source from which it sprang. Without that potential, poetry cannot exist. It is also true that people have always needed to welcome poetry, to receive it as a gift, to be receptive to it. Despite the imperfections arising from the way it is given concrete expression, there is something vital and irrevocable in poetry: words that are uttered in it are uttered forever and can never be annulled. This holds true even if they sometimes reach their audience in an "adulterated" form.

When all's said and done, translation is about human communication in the broadest sense. It is in the nature of human beings to recognize and be recognized, to seek and to be sought. In other words, translation is an intrinsic part of the human mind. In the biblical episode of Pentecost, the Word is heard and understood by all—though no one quite understands how. For me, that is the "first translation".

Translation is about human communication in the broadest sense.

■ **Your were born in Florence, you were educated there, you have always lived there, and even if your duties have taken you elsewhere, you have always returned there. Didn't you ever feel the need to cast off your moorings and get away from your origins?**

M. L.: No. My origins have not been an obstacle to my poetry, because Florence has always been, apart from one or two moments of eclipse, a pole of universal attraction. Florence's culture is nothing if not universal. Far from being local or parochial, it is open to all that is human, and has been at least since the thirteenth century.

■ **In the 1930s Florence was a hotbed of poetic creativity. Literary historians refer to "Florentine hermeticism" as an extremely fruitful movement.**

M. L.: The poets to whom the "hermetic" label was attached were not all Florentines, but it is true that at that time Eugenio Montale, Carlo Emilio Gadda, Alfonso Gatto, Tommaso Landolfi, Elio Vittorini and others all congregated in Florence. The literary tradition of Dante's city was not the only reason why they were there. During the Fascist period Florence was an "oasis", a place "apart" in Italian life. Because of its marginal relationship with the country's main political and economic centres, it enjoyed a degree of cultural freedom that encouraged the emergence of innovative movements. This was an important factor which, on top of the prestige of its centuries-old literary and artistic tradition, enabled Florence to continue to play a leading role despite the political situation in Italy. Moreover, our movement was underpinned by no specific doctrine or aesthetics. The poetic renaissance of the 1930s was driven solely by the need to lend poetic language a new, more profound and more human credibility. Hermeticism inspired two or three generations of poets. Even such already mature and established poets as Montale and Ungaretti underwent a certain renewal thanks to the interest and support of younger poets.

■ **What were your sources of inspiration and points of reference in international poetry at that time?**

M. L.: We wanted to pursue the discourse of the Symbolists while at the same time adapting it to our environment and our motivations. Our inspiration was Mallarmé, and also Rimbaud. Our movement brought about an important change in Italian literary language, which opened up to other traditions, especially those of other European countries, thanks to great translators like Giovanni Russo, Renato Poggioli and, for Spanish, Carlo Bo. As for myself, I am sure that living and working in that environment left a lasting mark on the way I express myself.

■ **In their desire to avoid retreating into a self-contained environment, intellectuals today, particularly those in the developing countries, are in danger of being waylaid by shallow cosmopolitanism, commercial culture and a superficial lingua franca—all of them examples of the decay triggered by globalization. What do you feel about this?**

M. L.: I think it's a very real problem, and I share the concern of intellectuals who have looked into the question, such as the Egyptian Nobel Prize winner, Naguib Mahfouz. Today's universalist trend, encouraged by historical events, brings

with it a risk of homogenization and consequently a loss of roots and identities. Certain writers, notably those belonging to dominant cultures that grew out of colonial civilizations, are perhaps less sensitive to this problem. Others however—and I'm thinking of certain forms of literary expression in the Caribbean—have come up with original and remarkably brilliant solutions through very powerful writing which has remained faithful to its roots while at the same time being virtually "global". But the dilemma of having to choose between regionalism and cosmopolitanism remains a very real problem in every country, including Italy.

■ **Ever since Hegel, intellectuals have periodically predicted the demise of art. While it is true that poetry has blithely ignored such predictions, the fact remains that it now leads a shadowy and marginal existence.**

M. L.: That's true. The myth of poetry has come to an end. Poetry was more vigorous and more important in the past than it is now. Take the Renaissance court, the medieval city, Dante, Petrarch. Poets had no power, but they could celebrate power and help define its form. And take, on the other hand, the antithetical power of poetry: I'm thinking here of Baudelaire and the key moment in the rift between power and poetry. It was by opposing those in power that poetry, in a way, demonstrated its force and its virtues.

After alliance, and then opposition, came divorce. And divorce led to indifference, the great enemy of poetry. So it was that poetry—and sometimes even great poetry—began to flourish in a marginal way. Poetry accepted that marginality.

■ **Some poets experienced marginality not as an ordeal but almost as a privilege.**

M. L.: Yes, as a sense of belonging, an essential feature of their identity. But while the myth of the poet has completely disappeared today, the poet's discourse is perhaps more alive than ever. In times as muddled and chaotic as ours, all society's players are called to account. We're all in the same boat. The poet is no longer someone special, but he is listened to like the rest of us. Of course, you can dodge him or give him a wide berth, but if you cross his path, and he is a true poet, you cannot turn a deaf ear to him. Perhaps his symbolic role is outmoded, but he is still there, and he is more necessary than ever. We

Perhaps the poet's symbolic role is outmoded, but he is still there, more necessary than ever.

all feel the lack of something essential. And when something is lacking we go looking for it in a place where we have a chance of finding it. Well, poetry is one of those places where the overall quest for meaning manifests itself.

■ **Is there a poem which you would have liked to write but have never written?**

M. L.: I believe that all poems *exclude*. Any poem, even the greatest and most perfect, leaves something unsaid. That is inherent in the symbolic power of poetic language and in its force. It is a limitation I perhaps feel more keenly than others. It is greater than I would have liked. It's true I sometimes think I could have expressed more directly something I have said. Whereas we think we mean one thing and set out to develop an idea, that idea may suddenly seem to us to be an external object. We sometimes get the feeling it has escaped us, even if that is not strictly speaking true. In fact, this idea is part of us. Without realizing it, we carry it within us and we work on it, and at the same time its presence influences our behaviour and everything we say or do. By externalizing it, we transform it, and there is sometimes a lingering regret that we have not expressed it straightforwardly.

Perhaps, on the other hand, the spirit of our age deserved a greater degree of dramatization. One of my plays, *Rosales*, is about terrorism. Terrorism and . . . eroticism, because, oddly enough, the two were closely connected at one time. One of the main characters is a kind of Don Juan, who gets caught up in a terrorist operation against his will. When I had finished the play, I realized there was more to be said on the subject, especially about the lurking, stifled yearning for liberation and salvation which drives us all, and which sometimes manifests itself in violence.

I could have said more about this highly elusive dimension—which some people find in traditional religion, while others deny its existence—that "something" which perhaps exists, but which we do not know how to look for. I believe that, while we assert that there is nothing, something exists, but we cannot manage to give it a name. ■

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MONTH BY MONTH

The body and the self

by Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat

© J.L. Dugast / Hoa Qui, Paris

In the normal way of things most healthy adults hardly think twice about their bodies until some kind of accident, breakdown or illness suddenly reminds them that they have one. Then they send in the artillery—doctors, analysts, medication—with orders to put things right. When the machine has been patched up, they forget about it again.

Yet when they really think about it, they realize that life and body are inseparable, bound together in a singular partnership. The body is inhabited by consciousness, but this consciousness does not exist outside its physical envelope. Life is a marriage, for better or for worse, between the two. Divorce is out of the question.

People who know that this is so and yet continue to pay no attention to their body or treat it badly, undermine the body's integrity and in so doing disturb the subtle rhythms and necessary harmonies between mind and body. They are the victims of a self-inflicted wound. How can people achieve a creative unity based on harmonious relations between body and consciousness, matter and mind? These questions have intrigued philosophers and theologians for thousands of years and are of growing concern for doctors, psychologists and psychotherapists today.

This issue of the *UNESCO Courier* attempts to give some idea of the variety and complexity of the answers that have been offered, particularly highlighting their strong cultural, philosophical and religious overtones. Differences in approach arise largely from what is meant by the notion of consciousness in different traditions of thought.

For some monists, consciousness is simply the highest, most refined form of the organization of matter. They would define the relations between physical and mental phenomena experimentally and rationally, using methods of scientific analysis.

Dualists, on the other hand, believe that there is an irreducible distinction between mind and matter. There is a difference in kind between the physical, perishable body and the immortal soul, which, though joined to the individual, is part of a transcendent reality and is accountable to a divine authority. To contribute to the soul's salvation the body must submit to God's commandments, which may, depending on the scriptures and the way they are interpreted, sometimes exalt sensual experience and sometimes disparage it.

A person can also be seen as a triad: a "gross body", a "subtle body" (or mind) and a cosmic substance, the Spirit. The Spirit, the ultimate level of reality, can be metaphorically compared to a single, infinite and eternal Energy. The gross body and the subtle body are provisional forms that partake of this Energy. Like ocean waves, they are born, grow and fade away without ever ceasing to be part of the ocean. The meaning of life is accomplished insofar as everyone, crossing the gross and subtle body's successive frontiers, returns to their infinite nature, rejoining the ocean's reality.

Mind and body have much to say to each other. As long as they stay on speaking terms. ■

Is there more to the human face than meets the eye?

© Krista Boggs, Paris

Face values

BY DAVID LE BRETON

The American artist George Catlin was once painting the portrait of a Sioux chieftain, Little Bear, and as the portrait was in semi-profile, part of the sitter's face was obscured. There was consternation when one of the bystanders called out roughly: "Little Bear is only half a man". Little Bear asked who it was that had spoken and the man gave his name, adding: "Ask the painter, he knows you are only half a man. He has painted only half your face. He knows the other half is no good."

A conflict that had been simmering beneath the surface of relations between the two men had erupted into the open over the interpretation, in moral terms, of a portrait, a painting wherein the sitter's worth is symbolically represented by the face he or she presents to other people. Shon-Ka, Little Bear's adversary, urged him to make the painter show him "full face".

© C. Lionel-Dupont, Paris

"The face gives living, mysterious expression to the absolute nature of the differences between individuals."

Little Bear rejected the suggestion, but soon the two men were again at loggerheads. Shon-Ka challenged Little Bear, shouting: "If he is a whole man, let him show it". To save face in the eyes of the others, the two men had to fight it out to the finish. Unfortunately, Little Bear's wife, knowing her husband's short temper, had taken the precaution of unloading his rifle, so that when the men fired at each other Shon-Ka was unhurt but his shot hit Little Bear full in the face, lacerating the "no good" part as if symbolically confirming Shon-Ka's accusations. Shon-Ka did not benefit by his deed. He hightailed it out into the prairie pursued by his fellow-tribesmen, while Catlin hastily packed up his belongings.

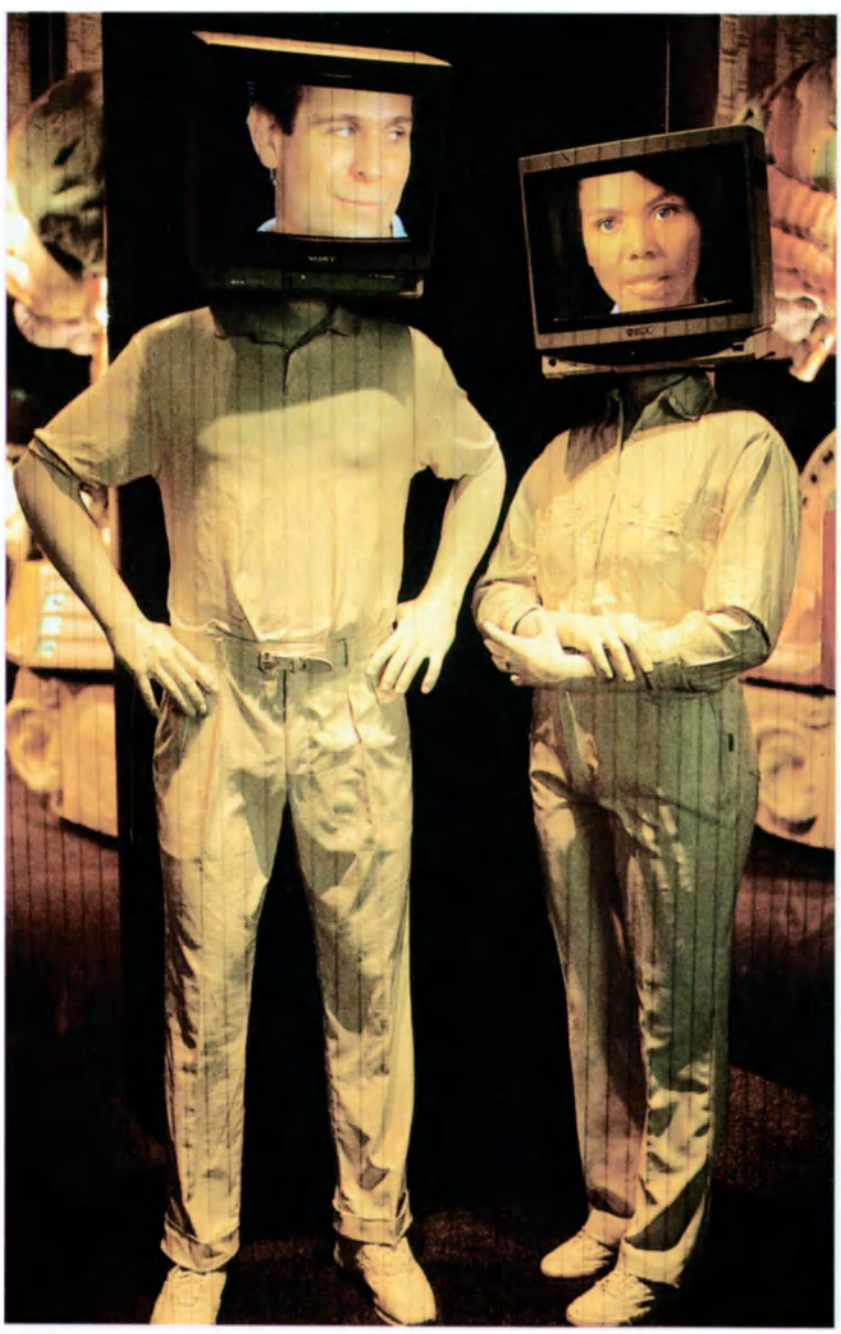
A mirror of individuality

Refusal to allow people the dignity of having a face of their own is a prime example of how to deny their status as human beings. There are a variety of metaphorical expressions—losing face, putting a bold face on things, being discountenanced, and so forth—that show how important the face is to an individual's sense of identity within the social context. Saving face and being able to look others in the face are considered serious issues in very many societies. In the symbology of racism, the suppression of all that is human in people requires that the sign denoting their membership of the human race be destroyed. In racist taunts they are treated as animals ▸

and degraded. To be stripped of their human rank they have to be symbolically deprived of their faces, the more easily to be despised or destroyed.

In everyday life, it is by our faces that we recognize one another. By going about with our hands and faces uncovered we are exposing those features by which we may be immediately differentiated. While the body forms the line of demarcation between the self and the external world or other people, it is in the face that the identity which gives social and cultural meaning to the individual is displayed. It is the face that gives living, mysterious expression to the absolute nature of what are in fact only minute differences between individuals. Faces work an infinite range of variations on the same simple theme, creating billions of shapes and expressions out of the most basic of symbols—eyes, nose, forehead, and so on. Facial features and expressions relate individuals to the community and at the same time allow them full scope to assert their differences and their uniqueness.

"Physiognomy endeavours to dispel the mystery of other people, to reduce it to a few simple features and a specific character, which entails an illusion of control that becomes a fearsome weapon in the hands of those who practice it as if it were a science."



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Of all parts of the body, it is in the face, that the highest values are concentrated. It is there that the sense of identity is mirrored, there that attractiveness and all the gradations of beauty and ugliness are recorded. So high a value is placed on it that any disfigurement becomes a traumatic experience, almost resulting in a loss of identity. The more importance a society attaches to individuality, the greater is the face's value. Portrait painting appeared in Europe at the time of the Renaissance, that is, at the same time as the individualism which characterizes Western societies. The Florentine painters of the quattrocento, Masaccio, Paolo Uccello and Piero della Francesca, were at pains to render the facial features of their sitters with meticulous accuracy, as were Flemish painters, especially Van Eyck, in his *Virgin with Chancellor Rolin* (1435), for example.

First impressions

As there seems to be a disturbing correspondence between personality and facial form, there was a strong temptation to make the face a kind of stand-in for the individual, the outward and visible sign of the character within. In religious art, the inexpressible and singular nature of the face was already reflected in the idea of it as the place wherein the soul chooses to

make its dwelling, where the spiritual takes corporeal form.

The importance of the face to the sense of identity is clear from the attention that lovers pay to it in their relationships, a theme plentifully illustrated in literature. "One of the signs of love", says Anne Philippe, "is the passion with which the lover looks at the loved one's face; the initial emotion, instead of dwindling, continues and swells, and the look in their eyes becomes Ariadne's thread, leading each to the other's heart."[1] The French novelist Michel Tournier sees the face as the focus of desire: "There is one sure way of knowing whether you love somebody," he writes. "It is when their face inspires more physical desire than any other part of their body."[2]

The lover's gaze seems permanently on the verge of experiencing some revelation and feeds upon that anticipation. The face always seems to be the place where the truth is at any moment about to be unveiled. Inexhaustible in its store of new or undiscovered meanings, it is like a territory waiting to be explored afresh every day, and the end of a love-relationship no doubt comes when the lovers find each other's faces ordinary and no longer seek out the mystery in them.

It is only a step from perceiving, as people often do, a close correspondence between the "soul" and the face, and believing that a thorough acquaintance with other people's minds can be obtained from studying their features. Although, as Montaigne says, "The face is a feeble surety", faces nevertheless exert a very strong influence when people meet. Other people's faces create a "first impression"—of liking or mistrust, curiosity or fear—that is not always easily dispelled. This emotional reaction, which is felt at first glance and in which imagination plays a very large part, to some extent directs the course of future encounters. What the Swiss writer Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801), the founder of physiognomics, called this "physiognomical feeling", though lacking in discernment, is one of the things that facilitate or hamper contact with others.

© C. Lionel Dupont Paris

"In love the face always seems to be the place where the truth is at any moment about to be unveiled."

The fallacy of physiognomy

Physiognomy therefore set itself the task of obliging faces to yield up their secrets. It claimed that individuals' external features faithfully reflect their inner characters and that their moral qualities can be immediately ascertained from the study of those ▸

features. Those who can read the signs of the inter-relationship between soul and body, whereby the face becomes as it were the individual's moral signature, hold mastery of their relations with other people. Physiognomy endeavours to dispel the mystery of other people, to reduce it to a few simple features and a specific character, and also to reveal, to expose the soul behind the body's disguise—a dubious enterprise entailing an illusion of control that becomes a fearsome weapon in the hands of those who practice it as if it were a science.

The vocabulary of physiognomy changes from place to place and period to period but the illusion of total control over others remains constant. It was in the nineteenth century that this pseudo-science flourished in Europe. Lavater and to an even greater extent his followers reduced human individuality to a small number of visual clues tied in with a typology of personality that psychology has since discarded. They were in fact interested not in the face as a whole but in sets of facial features: merely from the shape of a forehead, the curl of a lip, the set of a nose or the look in the subjects' eyes, assumptions could be made about their psychological make-up; and their moral essence, their temperaments, hidden vices, qualities or faults and their as yet uncommitted acts of faithlessness could be unambiguously brought to light. For the physiognomists, the arrangement of the features unlocked the secret of the individual's identity.

"The Florentine painters of the quattrocento were at pains to render the facial features of their sitters with meticulous accuracy." Below, a portrait of Battista Sforza by the Tuscan painter Piero della Francesca (1416-1492).

© G. Dagli Orti, Paris

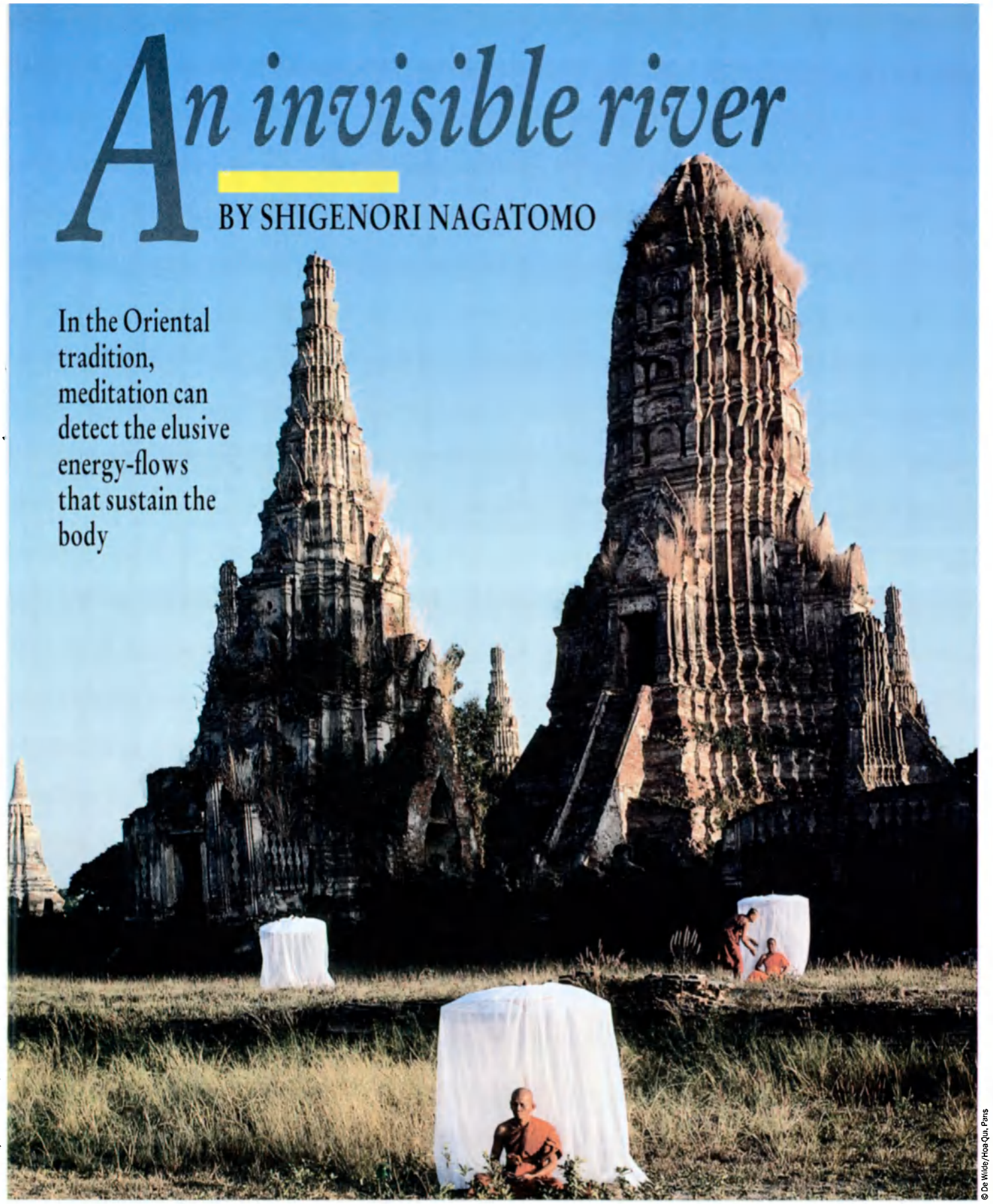
The ambivalence and the element of surprise present in human beings' relationship with their own faces should in fact be enough to discourage anyone from trying to map out the personality on the basis of facial characteristics. The great painters of self-portraits such as Rembrandt painted themselves over and over again with different faces. "The physiognomy," wrote the seventeenth-century French moralist Jean de La Bruyère, "though it may serve for the purpose of conjecture, is not a measure whereby we may judge men."[3] Faces give only indications of other people's personalities, not full descriptions. It is only possible to get to know others by meeting them, speaking to them and seeing them in action. Faces are not pretty geometrical figures or sets of tell-tale features. Only when approached delicately, with a special kind of gentleness, does a face reveal its innumerable facets. ■

1. *Miroirs; autoportraits,* an anthology edited by Michel Tournier. Denoel, Paris, 1973.
2. Michel Tournier, *La goutte d'or,* Gallimard, Paris, 1986.
3. Jean de La Bruyère, *Les caractères ou les mœurs de ce siècle,* 1688 (first edition).

An invisible river

BY SHIGENORI NAGATOMO

In the Oriental tradition, meditation can detect the elusive energy-flows that sustain the body



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Monks meditating before the ruins of Ayutthaya, the capital of ancient Siam (now Thailand), north of Bangkok.

In order to understand the East Asian idea of the body, particularly that of the Chinese and Japanese, we must imagine that instead of having a body, we *are* our body—and more importantly, that our body *lives* us. The East Asian tradition also recognizes a dimension of being that escapes our everyday understanding. This is important, because our perception of our body influences the method of healing we think to be appropriate and effective for it. Without a clear understanding of the body, ▶

▸ we cannot understand how the body can be healed.

The idea of the body which has been cherished in the East Asian tradition is based on the philosophy of self-cultivation and is derived mainly from experience obtained through meditation. In Buddhism, Daoism and Shintoism, meditation is a technique for observing and becoming attuned to the intricate workings of the life-supporting energy system that exists beyond or beneath the psycho-physiological activity of the living human body.

The flowing body

A characteristic image of the East Asian meditational perspective is that of the "flowing body". The body is likened to a river whose water is, ideally, in pristine condition and transparent but cannot be seen by the naked eye or be detected anatomically as blood vessels and nerve fibres can. The body that flows is a "subtle-body" and since it is invisible to the senses in everyday life, most of us are relatively unconscious of it.

It can, however, be detected through heightened awareness during meditation. When the threshold of self-consciousness is lowered in conjunction with the reduction of respiration, an advanced meditator can become aware of a subtle flow of energy throughout his or her body. This energy, which is called *ki* in Japanese (Chinese, *qi*), is the source from which both, the psychological and the physiological emerge.

Ki-energy flows through a network of

In April, Laotian women celebrate the start of the new year in a Luang Prabang temple.

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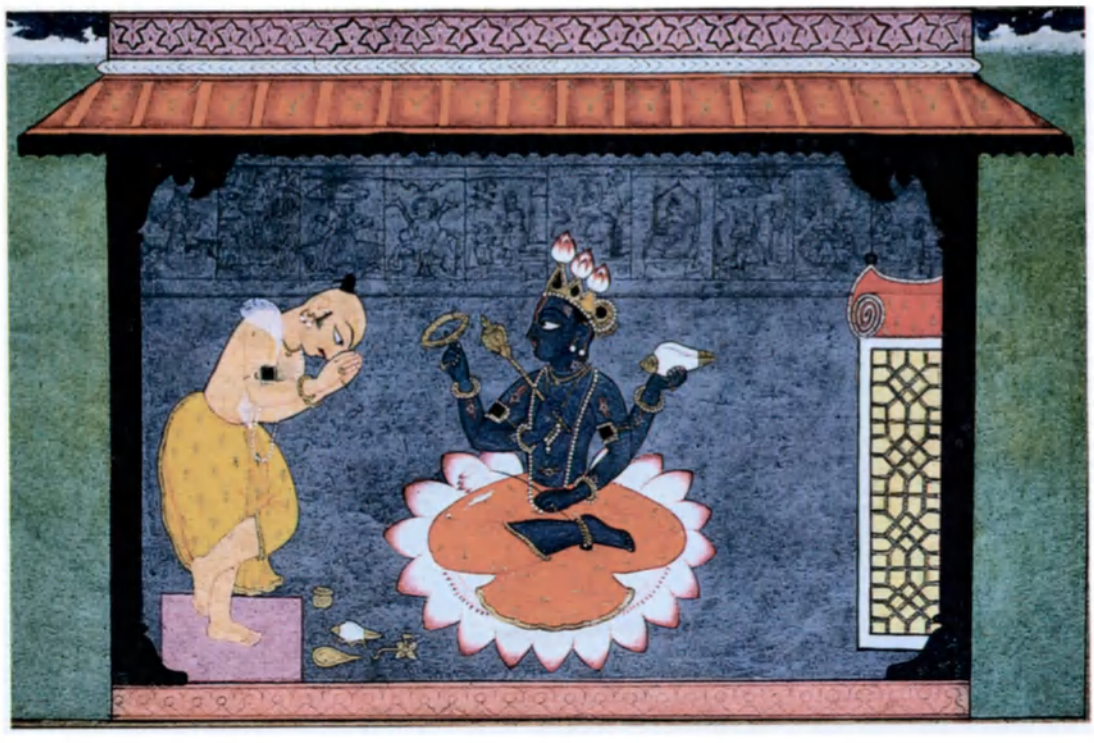

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The 12th-century Bengali poet Jayadeva, author of the *Gitagovinda* ("Song of the Cowherd") bows in respect to the Hindu god Vishnu. Indian miniature from the Pahari school (1730).

circuits, or "*ki*-meridians", beneath the skin. According to psychologist Motoyama Hiroshi this network is located in the water-rich area of the connective tissues of the dermis, the deep inner layer of the skin, where such chemical substances as sodium, potassium, calcium, chloride and collagen are found. Since these substances exist as ions in the bodily fluids, the flow is electro-physiologically detectable, so that the flowing body is more than just a metaphor. *Ki*-energy literally flows beneath the psycho-physiological body of which we are ordinarily aware.

The flowing body knows no boundary between the interior and the exterior, between mind and matter. For this reason acupuncture medicine maintains that absorption and release of *ki*-energy occur—though for most of us, unconsciously—between the flowing body and its surroundings, and between one flowing body and another.

The second idea of the body which is relevant for religious healing within the East Asian tradition is that of the spirit-body, a concept which brings us into the domain of religion proper. Each human spirit-body has a certain form which is different from that of the individual's physical body and also from other spirit bodies. It is defined primarily by the pattern of emotions such as love, hate and anger, and their existential repercussions. Whereas the flowing body is confined to the immediate ambience of its physical body (the exernal emission of *ki*-energy having a four- to five-metre range), the spirit body is believed to possess relative freedom from spatial and temporal confinement.

In addition to the hierarchy of spirit-bodies, however, Buddhists believe that there is a hierarchy of divine spirits, whose nature and attributes vary, their experiential correlates depending on the colour of their light, which ranges from the primary colours such as red and blue, to complete transparency. They are deified and worshipped under different names in different belief systems.

The most significant point about these different ideas of the body is that the "visible" and the "invisible" are, in principle, reversible. Without this reversibility no religious healing is possible.

Religious healing

The crucial difference between religious healing and other kinds of treatment is in their respective goals. The former addresses a pathological condition and seeks to achieve higher religious cognition; the latter are content to restore the body to its normal everyday state. Another significant difference between ▸

religious and other forms of healing is that the pathological condition that calls for religious healing is functional in nature, and not an organic disorder.

In religious healing, a pathological condition is regarded as a necessary step on the way to spiritual growth. It strengthens the living psycho-physiological body and prepares it for encounters with spirit bodies and spiritual beings, and eventually for emancipation from this world.

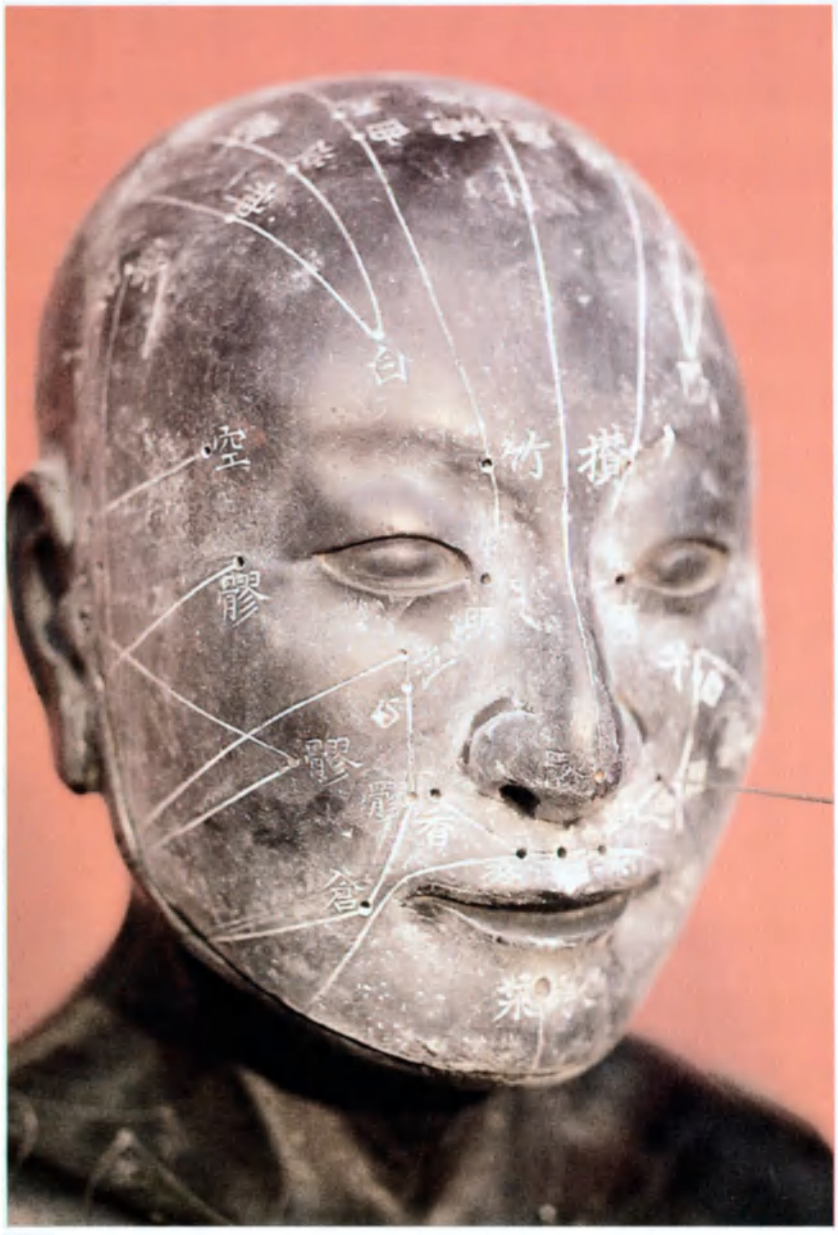
Acupuncture

Acupuncture medicine is particularly effective in treating both functional and chronic disease. It considers that a pathological condition is engendered by the stagnation of *ki*-energy flowing in the meridians. The "water" in the flowing body becomes polluted, accumulates debris, and departs from its ideal pristine condition and transparency. This stagnation causes an excess or lack of *ki*-energy and an inversion of complementary forces (yin-yang phases). There is a departure from the harmonious, natural distribution of *ki*-energy between the right and left sides of the body, and between its upper and lower parts.

Three interrelated kinds of factor may contribute to this stagnation.

The first is a psychological condition brought about by emotional instability. People process emotional stimuli differently in accordance with "likes" and "dislikes" that originate in their unconscious. In their interpersonal relationships and in dealing with things around them, this

A Korean shaman or *mudang*. Early 20th-century painting on paper.



The head of a bronze statue used for teaching acupuncture (Korea, 15th century).

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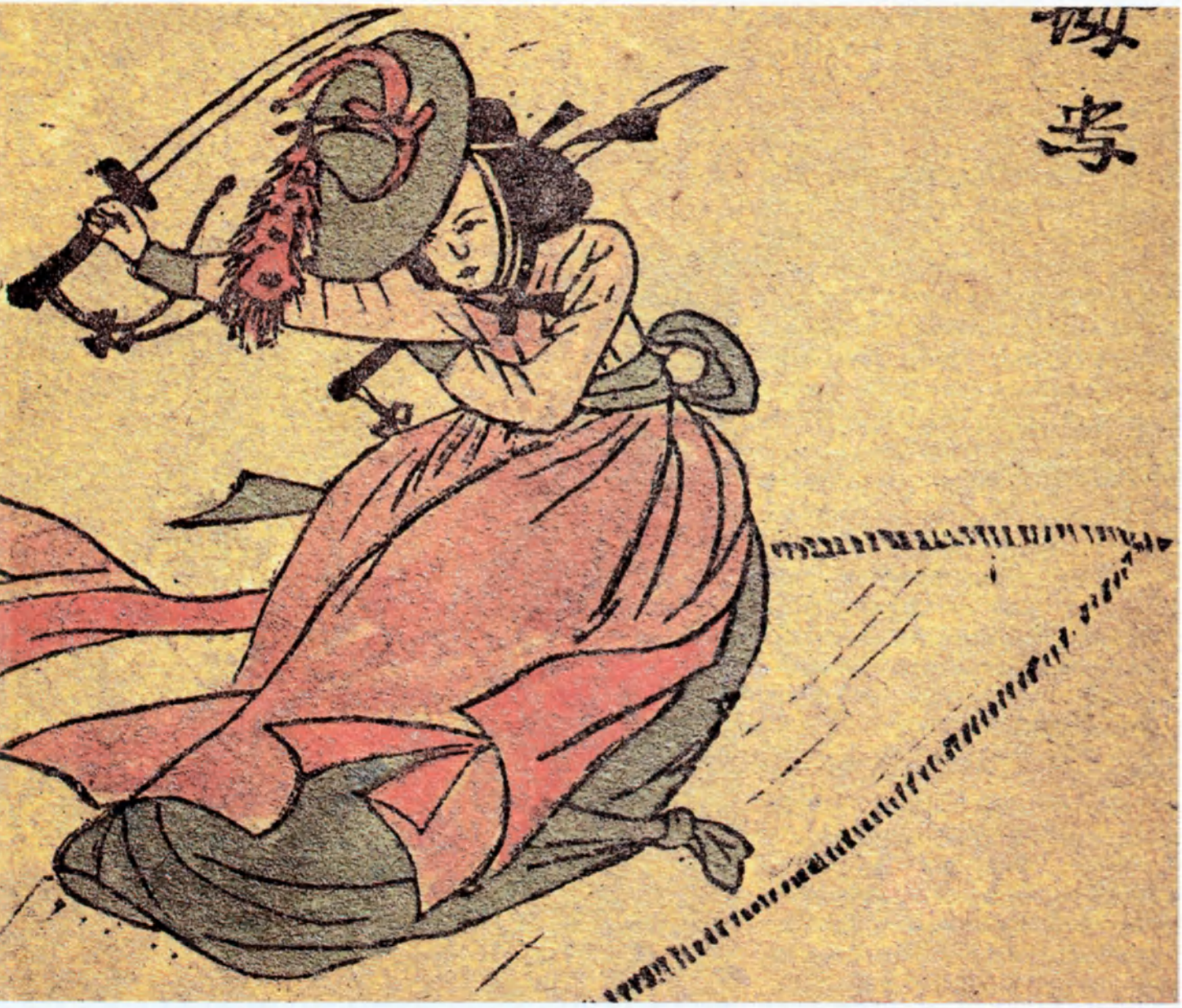

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unconscious propensity unknowingly creates emotional distortion and instability, affecting, for example, the proper function of the autonomic nervous system. The theory of stress and adaptation developed by the Canadian scientist Hans Selye, when interpreted physiologically, captures the significance of this condition.

Secondly, environmental conditions, especially climatic conditions, may help to cause stagnation. Acupuncture medicine warns against the inadaptation of the human body to its surrounding "climatic" ambience, although in the modern world the environment is becoming less and less appropriate for the living human body.

The third factor is our attitude towards our health, including such factors as irregular lifestyle, negligence, and exhaustion, all of which are rooted in the ethical orientation of our lives.

Curative images

Another category of healing involves manipulation of the flowing body and the spirit-body by means of an image-experience. Religious healing in Daoism, Buddhism, and to some extent in Shintoism uses visualization techniques of this sort. This psychological approach, based on the curative effect an image can have on the body, is employed because a religious image carries transformative power. Jung's "active imagination" is an application of this method.

A general feature of visualization is to learn to experience a "sacred" image, initially by creating it within one's psyche. ▸

But as one advances in this practice, one relies on the spontaneous generation of the luminous form within one's psyche and beyond, until one comes to the free generation of any kind of image one wishes. Using this method, self-healing occurs in the course of a spiritual journey. However, since this is difficult for the inexperienced to achieve, a healer is called in to help. For instance, if possession by a malevolent spirit is deemed to be the cause of a pathological condition, the healer will negotiate with the spirit and try to persuade it to awaken from its fixation on the sufferer's spirit-body and leave it alone.

In Buddhism, emptiness-meditation may be employed in order to counter possession by a malevolent spirit by bringing about its non-substantiality. Significantly, possession by either a benevolent or malevolent spirit is closely connected with spiritual development or lack thereof.

Enlightenment

A third kind of religious healing in the East Asian tradition is the Kharmic reconfiguration of the ripe, kharmic body. This idea is predicated on an Indian belief that a human being comes into this world in virtue of his/her own kharma, and dies in virtue of the same, i.e., the human as a contingent being. This kind of healing, however, is reserved only for the few who have become "god-men," or who have achieved the highest *satori* (enlightenment), by transcending the temporal demarcation. Healing of this type is linked with the creative power to effect a change in the psycho-physical world, something which is still a mystery for most of us. What is prescribed to a sufferer in such a case, as is true with all religious suffering, is daily prayer and/or meditation, along with the strengthening of faith, in order to nurture spiritual growth.

The philosophical background to the idea of the body and healing in the East Asian tradition is that human beings cohabit the world of nature with other living beings. By transforming their everyday mode of consciousness they can become one with the creative activity of nature and awaken in themselves a natural healing power. ■

Sometimes affirmed, sometimes denied, the body has always occupied a central place in Jewish thought

Studying the Talmud in a synagogue in Israel.

© Charles Harbutt/Rapho Paris

THE BODY AND THE BOOK

BY DAVID BIALE

In the Bible, the foundational text of Judaism, the body is treated primarily in the context of the cultic laws of purity. These laws dictate who is pure enough to enter a sacred site and offer a sacrifice. Anyone who has touched a dead human body, for example, is considered impure. Similarly, certain diseases, such as some skin disorders, cause impurity. Most normal body functions, such as urination or defecation, do not create impurity, while those related to the sexual organs, such as seminal ejaculation, menstruation and pathological bleeding from the genitals, do render a person and his or her sexual partner impure.

The impurity related to genital discharges, both normal and abnormal, is puzzling, since the priestly laws, in which we find these prohibitions, regard sexuality very positively. The biblical priests appear to have been quite preoccupied with questions of fertility and it is they who authored the divine blessings "be fruitful and multiply." Why did such authors regard sexual fluids as impure, if they wished to affirm sexuality? The answer seems to be that such fluids were seen as divine substances whose very power created impurity when they left the body.

Another aspect of the body regarded as divine was blood, although normal bleeding did not create impurity. The biblical authors believed that blood is the life-force and that spilling blood was a violation of the divine order. The blood of animals was not to be eaten, but instead returned to God in a ceremony expiating the sin of ▸

killing the animal. Spilling human blood could not, however, be expiated in the same way. Instead, the only atonement for killing a human being was to execute the murderer. The Bible's very severe law of capital punishment was a product of this holy status of human blood.

The Jewish religion is not based only on the Bible. In the first centuries of the Common Era, a parallel body of law, called the "Oral Law" or "rabbinic law," was formulated and set in writing by Jewish scholars called rabbis. Although rabbinic law had some of its foundations in the Bible, much of it reflected the prevailing issues of Greco-Roman culture, which was the culture in which the rabbis lived. Thus, the attitude towards the body in rabbinic literature can best be understood in the context of late antiquity.

For Greco-Roman thinkers, such as the Stoic philosophers, the body itself posed less of a problem than did the passions, which could overpower one's reason. The rabbis were also preoccupied with the passions, which they called the yetzer ha-ra (the "evil impulse"). They held that the law is designed to restrain and channel the passions into constructive activities. But the body itself they generally viewed as a neutral vessel. There are, to be sure, negative statements about women's bodies in rabbinic literature, but they are typically in the context of the anxiety of the rabbis, who were all men, about women distracting them from the holy duty to study.

The vehicle for the soul

The rabbis did not believe in a division between the body and the soul. One rabbinic saying held that the soul is like a lame man riding on the back of a blind man. Thus the body provides the necessary vehicle for the soul, although, by itself, it is morally blind. The soul is always embodied and, in messianic times, the body will be resurrected with the soul. However, at least one rabbi held that in messianic times "there will be no eating, drinking or procreation." For this particular school of thought, the body in a "perfected" world would not have the same drives and needs as bodies in this world.

This last point brings up the question of the rabbinic attitude towards sexuality. In general, the rabbis affirmed sexuality and held that all men must marry and father children (the law in this case is only directed towards men). Men also have an additional obligation to give sexual pleasure to their wives. At the same time, the rabbis had ambivalent feelings about male sexuality. Their position seemed to be that the sexual desires of the body are legitimate and even holy, but only if the sexual act is performed with the proper restraint. Sex must be potentially procreative, so that, for example, masturbation is labeled a capital crime, something unknown to the Bible. While the rabbis never endorsed celibacy, as did the Christian Church fathers, there is strong evidence that they were also attracted by scholarly abstinence. In some texts, the study of Torah (biblical and rabbinic law) is invested with eroticism, suggesting that intellectual activity might compete with the desires of the body.

Rabbinic law extended biblical law into virtually every area of life. As such, it governed almost every aspect and function of the body, from eating to sex. Although rabbinic literature is generally motivated by interpretation of the law, which the rabbis believed was revealed at Mt. Sinai, it also contains a great deal of medical speculation. For example, the rabbis devoted considerable attention to trying to understand female reproductive physiology and their theories often owed much to late antique medicine. They were particularly concerned with the details of women's menstrual cycle, since the law prohibited sexual relations during menstruation. They developed a whole science of menstrual blood to distinguish between healthy and pathological female bleeding. Reading rabbinic literature confirms the observation (meant to be derogatory) of the first-century Christian, Paul, that Judaism is truly "Israel of the flesh."

Proper intention

In the Middle Ages, the rabbinic insistence on the unity of body and soul began to break down under the influence of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plotinus, who became known to Jewish thinkers through the Arabs. Jewish philosophers, such as Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), often denigrated the body as representing the purely material. It is the soul that gives form to matter and therefore invests it with holiness. Maimonides was particularly harsh in denouncing sexuality as a negative impulse of the material

A Jewish marriage in Paris (France).

© Zarand/Rapho, Paris

body. He condemned the sense of touch as the lowest of all human faculties. Yet Maimonides was also a physician and expounder of Jewish law. Both of these disciplines taught him the importance of cultivating the body and attending to its needs and desires. Maimonides therefore tried to strike a middle ground between his philosophical asceticism and the bodily affirmations of medicine and Jewish law. His doctrine with respect to the body emphasized moderation and self-control.

A different school of thought in the Jewish Middle Ages was the mystical (often called "Kabbalah"). The mystics or Kabbalists sometimes began their speculations in explicit rejection of Maimonides. An important thirteenth-century text called the Iggeret ha-Kodesh ("Letter of Holiness") starts off by criticizing Maimonides' stand on the body. How could the sense of touch be evil, since God had created the body and called it "good"? In particular, the text insists that Adam and Eve had had sexual relations in the Garden of Eden and had done so without any sinful pleasure (this was a theme that could be found in both early rabbinic and Christian literature). But, as much as the "Letter of Holiness" sought to affirm the body, it also placed severe limitations on it. If men and women engaged in sexual relations without the proper intention, then the purely physical act became a form of idolatry.

"The Letter of Holiness" placed such enormous importance on correct intentionality because of the Kabbalistic theology which underlay it. According to this mystical tradition, God himself consists of male and female elements, which are engaged in a kind of spiritual intercourse. Proper human sexuality can be directed towards God by the correct thoughts. In this way, human sexual relations actually cause the male and female elements in God to unite sexually. Improper sexuality or improper thoughts cause these elements to break apart. Thus, human sexuality has cosmic consequences.

In a similar way, all human activities can magically influence God. The Kabbalists describe God in anthropomorphic terms, that is, as having a body just like a human body. This divine body lacks materiality: we might call it a "spiritual" body. But since God's body is the model for human bodies, the way in which human beings use their bodies can affect God's body. If human beings remain trapped in their material, bodily desires, then they subvert the spirituality of God's body. The task of humans is to spiritualize their material bodies and bring them into harmony with the divine body.

The resurrection of the body

This doctrine from the thirteenth century was to have tremendous implications for Jewish thought in the subsequent centuries. In the eighteenth century, a pietistic Jewish movement in Poland, called Hasidism, created a popular theology based on the earlier Kabbalah. The Hasidim held that every action of the body might be turned into a spiritual act since everything in the material world contains a spark of the divine.

Some Hasidic doctrines celebrated the material world and spoke of worshipping God through the material. A common Hasidic teaching held, for example, that even the simple act of eating or drinking could be transformed into the worship of God with the proper intentionality. Others, on the other hand, saw the purpose of the worship of God as emptying the material of its divinity. This latter approach, sometimes termed "the annihilation of the material," led to a much more ascetic

approach to the body, particularly in the realm of sexuality. For these Hasidic masters, any sexual act that involved pleasure was sinful.

The eighteenth century also witnessed the emergence of a movement of Jewish enlightenment which challenged the world of rabbinic and medieval Judaism. Part of the critique of the Jewish enlighteners focused on the treatment of the body in traditional Judaism. For example, they argued that the practice of early marriage, which was common among the Jews of eastern Europe, led to disease and bodily weakness. They also wished to reform the way Jews dressed to make them look more "European". And they sought to transform traditional attitudes towards sexuality into something like emerging bourgeois values.

A much more radical critique of traditional attitudes towards the body developed at the end of the nineteenth century among the inheritors of the Jewish enlightenment. With the rise of European anti-semitism and the perceived failure of Jewish emancipation, secular Jewish thinkers turned towards nationalist solutions of the Jewish question. These nationalists adopted and extended the earlier Enlightenment critique of traditional Judaism. Traditional Judaism, they argued, had denigrated the body in favour of pure spirituality and, as a result, Jews had become physically weak and politically impotent. They wished to return bodily vigour to the Jews by creating what the Zionist ideologue Max Nordau called "muscular Judaism." Following the fashionable medical diagnosis of the time, Jews were considered "neurasthenics" (victims of a disorder of the nerves). The only way to cure this nervous disease was to strengthen the muscles. Consequently, a whole movement of Jewish gymnastic and sporting clubs developed to transform the Jewish body.

The Zionists took this critique one step further by insisting that the only real way to transform the Jewish body was to transplant it to the soil of Palestine. Only in a Jewish society based on agriculture rather than petty commerce (the typical occupation of the European Jews) could Jews become physically strong. This nationalist ideal was based on a mythic vision of the healthy Jews of the Bible, as opposed to the weak and diseased Jews of the Diaspora, but it was equally inspired by other European nationalisms, which also engaged in a cult of the body.

One might say that, far from negating Jewish tradition, this secular nationalism unconsciously continued a persistent motif in historical Judaism: the centrality of the body. From the Bible, to rabbinic literature, medieval philosophy and mysticism, the body in all of its facets has played a crucial role in Jewish thought, at times affirmed and at others denied, but never ignored. In the final analysis, the "people of the book" can never be divorced from the "people of the body." ■

In Cameroon, right, as in other parts of Africa, masks, costumes and symbolic objects are widely used in traditional ceremonies.

© Israel Talby. Rapho, Paris

A traditional Friday evening Jewish family meal in Hadera (Israel).

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A language of its own

BY MANGA BEKOMBO PRISO

The body is itself a medium of expression in African societies based on the oral tradition

Africans regard the body (*nyólo, nyama*) as a "full" object because of the organs and substances it envelops and of which it is the overall expression. The idea of the "body-in-itself", externalized and observed from the outside, appears in certain linguistic expressions: a person who watches his or her body in action sees it tremble (*nyólo e ma sówá mbá*: body trembles in me), forces it to sustain an effort (*swè nyólo*: force body), sacrifices it through suicide (*bwd nyólo*: kill body), preserves it from danger (*sunga nyólo*: save body). To communicate with his or her body, a person puts it to the test (*senga nyólo*: feel body) and gets it to relax (*bôbisè nyólo*, relax, loosen body).

Despite the importance of its mediation function, this externalized body is a precarious secondary organism which is consigned to oblivion when it ceases to be driven by the forces around it. It is not the body that thinks but the I (*Na*); nor does it dream, that is the function of the ▸

- Self (*Mbá*), for which the body is merely a physical envelope. In African societies where the oral tradition predominates, the body is a product of the spoken word, and as such it is itself a medium of expression. This is particularly evident in African sculpture, which largely consists of depictions of the body, sometimes wearing a mask, sometimes without. These sculptures always have a meaning. Whereas the body is never represented in order to serve as a cult object or to demonstrate a particular aesthetic, in African masks and statuary it expresses an idea, a desire, a destiny. It reveals a phenomenon, designates a thing, issues an instruction or a taboo.

As a cultural construct, the body is seen in terms of its constituent parts, which are clearly differentiated from each other. Each part has a place and a function whose importance varies depending on the context in which it is perceived and the value attached to the objects with which it is associated.

Good and bad blood

The body's symbolism is organized round its external parts, which occupy space, and its internal parts—the hard, soft or fluid substances whose continual interaction generates life-giving energy. In some parts of Africa, quality of blood reflects the body's amount of efficient energy. In order to maximize this energy the blood is "washed" by absorbing medicines, and if it has been rashly tainted some of it is extracted from the body. Blood brings

© G Dagli Orti, Paris

A fertility statuette from northern Cameroon.

good or bad luck depending on whether it is "good" or "bad". It is the "breath of life", the "life force", which may be attacked, topped up and strengthened by the medicine man, his opponent, the soothsayer and the healer. Blood also has a unifying quality that comes into play when oath-takers exchange a little of their blood and absorb it under the watchful supervision of ancestors who are keepers of the law. In this instance, blood-sharing is more important than verbal promises, for although promises are binding, the exchange of blood guarantees that they will be kept. At weddings, joint consumption of the blood of a sacrificed animal sets the seal on lasting solidarity between bride and bridegroom.

Head and foot

During a chief's consecration ritual in southern Cameroon a woman over child-bearing age squirts purifying water on the chief's feet at regular intervals, while making a recitation in which the words *sángó* (father, master), *ngínya* (strength) and *bolódí* (power and fullness) are many times repeated. This is because feet are in almost constant contact with the earth of the village, which is as "pure" as the water and the plants that grow from it, as well as being the home of the omniscient ancestors who want everything in society to be as it should be. Feet symbolize putting down roots, the time-honoured presence of ancestors and the power that springs from the action of a chief.

As the location of the intellect, the head is regarded as a microcosm, as a body-and-soul reproduction of the person and the "tool" that connects him or her to the cosmos. Because of this, the head is used in separation rituals. When members of the lineage leave the village to make their fortune far away, they are like a baby being weaned from its mother's breast. Both migrants and babies are bathed and their skulls are ritually anointed. ■

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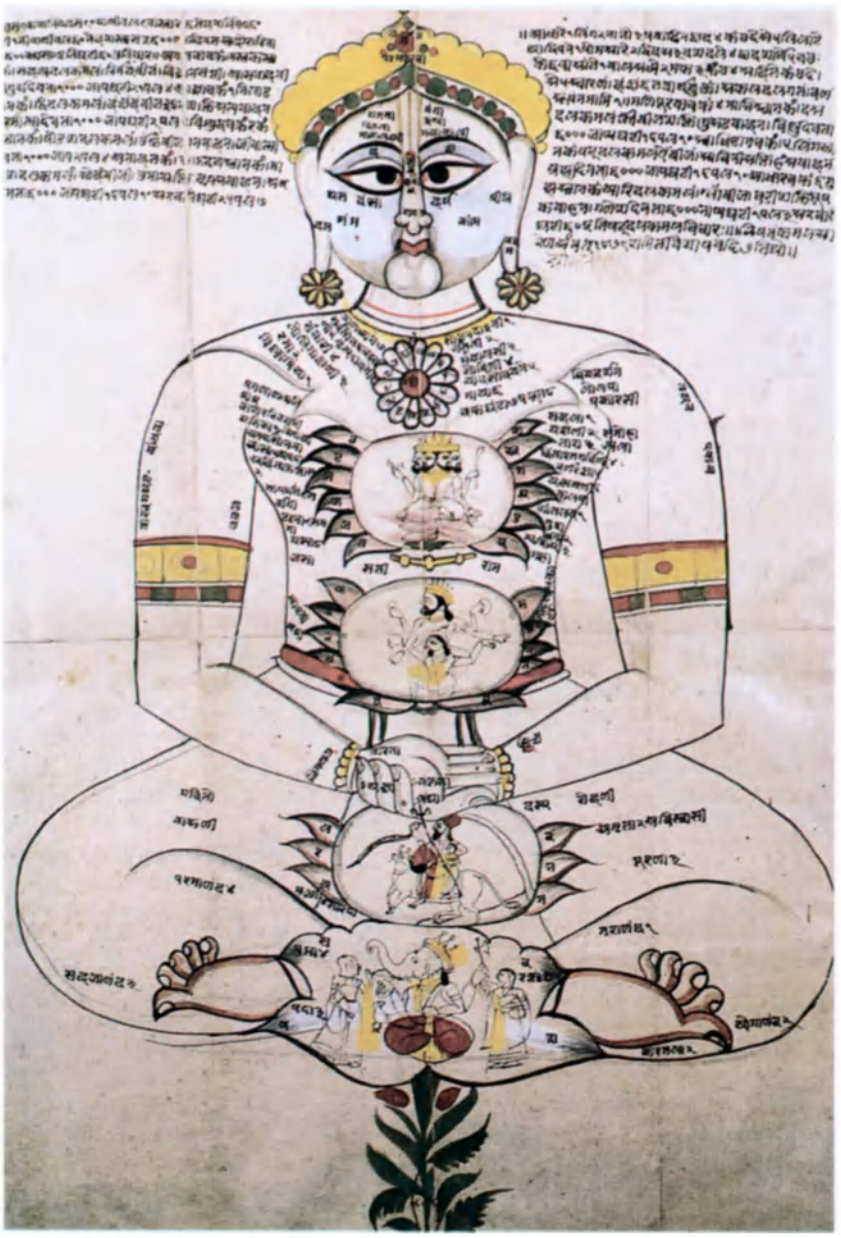
A double-faced helmet mask from western Cameroon. It is designed to regulate the social order.

FROM SELFHOOD TO SALVATION

BY ROMAIN MAITRA

In Hindu thought the body is a finely tuned instrument always threatened with disharmony

An 18th-century Indian miniature from Rajasthan showing the subtle body.



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In the Indian tradition, the human body is viewed as integrating a complex variety of mental and physical processes. It is part of a body-mind continuum that is regarded as the instrument of a Self (*Atman*) or Soul that is essentially transcendent and free of its embodied condition.

The ancient Hindu scriptures, the Upanishads, contain many passages on the body-mind complex and its relation to the *Atman*. The body-mind complex arises from the ultimate *Atman* from which the universe came into being: "from Him are born life, mind, the sense organs and also ether, wind, fire, water and earth." In the Upanishadis the body is also described as "foul-smelling and insubstantial", but another sacred Hindu text, the *Bhagavad Gita*, describes it as the chosen vehicle of "the perpetual, imperishable and incomprehensible body-dweller" in which the *Atman* breathes and from which it radiates.

Later systems of Hindu philosophy assign to each person two bodies—an exterior or "gross body" and an interior or "subtle body". Perhaps Indian philosophers conceived of the existence of a subtle body in order to make intelligible the process of metempsychosis or transmigration of the soul after death. The Vedanta, one of the main philosophical schools of

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In the Himalayas, a yogi and a young Buddhist monk practise concentration.

Hinduism, regards this subtle body as incorporating the senses of the body—both perceptive and active—and of mind, intellect and sensation.

In this Hindu conception, the subtle body links together physiological and psychological processes. It is believed to be made up of a web of numerous arteries (*nadis*) through which the vital energy circulates, and of a few centres called wheels (*cakras*), receptacles (*adharas*) and knots (*granthis*), where the arteries converge and meet the nerves of the gross body. The three principal arteries—*ida*, *pingala* and *susumna*—extend along the spinal column between the spot next to the anus, the *muladhar cakra*, and the spot on top of the skull, the *brahmarandhra*, where a thousand-petaled white lotus blossoms. However, the *cakra* patterns between these two spots vary according to different theological systems and usually correspond to psychosomatic sites experienced during yogic practices.

A microcosm of the universe

A vital goal of *Tantra*, basically a Hindu (also Buddhist) system of esoteric practices for attaining spiritual experiences and the fulfilment of worldly desires, is to spiritualize the human body which is considered to be a microcosm of the universe. Tantric discipline enables us to discover a mystical geography in the subtle body. The spinal cord represents the fictitious Mount Meru. The three principal arteries running along the left, the right and the middle of the spine represent the three sacred rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati. The breathing process represents the span of time. By awakening the female force Sakti, lying dormant like a coiled serpent in the *muladhar*, and making it move upward along the spinal cord to be united with the male force Siva at the *brahmarandhra*, the yogi realizes the supreme non-duality of the Self. ▶

In the theoretical construct of Ayurveda—"the science of long life"—life (*ayus*) arises due to association of body, sensory capacities, mind and Self. The gross, physical body is an arrangement of the five elements which are present in nature and are genetically transmitted through the semen of the father and the ovum and blood of the mother. They are earth, water, fire, wind and space.

Wind (*vayu*), fire (*tejas*) and water (*ap*) are fundamental to Ayurvedic biological theory for they are considered as the principal components of life and movement. Taken together, these elements generate a nutrient fluid (*rasa*) that nourishes the body as a whole.

An 18th-century Indian miniature depicting *kundalini* (from the Sanskrit *kundala*, "coil" of rope), latent energy coiled like a serpent at the base of the trunk in the subtle body. The energy is "awakened" by certain yogic disciplines.

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The three humours

Wind (*vayu*) is dry, light and soft, and indicates motion. It manifests itself as the motor system of the organism which includes respiration, swallowing, speaking, digestion, excretion, ejaculation, the labour of childbirth and so on. Fire manifests itself as the energy system of the organism, including bilious secretion (*pitta*) of the liver and the "cooking" process of the digestion, the colouring in blood and complexion, and the energizing of desire. *Pitta* is hot, bitter, oily fluid of bluish colour. Water manifests itself as the integrating system of the body, including phlegm (*kaph*), mucus, plasma and so forth and holds together the limbs and tissues. *Kaph* is heavy, moist, unctuous and white and is conveyed by air through the vessels. According to the biological principle of Ayurveda, therefore, *vayu*, *pitta* and *kaph* are the overall respiratory, digestive and integrative components of the gross body, its three essential humours.

When these components are in balance and harmony, they contribute to the health of the organism, and when they are not, they cause illnesses. Thus, the human body exists in a state of precarious and constantly threatened equilibrium, and the task of the physician is to diagnose the imbalances that occur in the person and restore balance through treatment. Ayurveda defines a healthy person as one in whom there is equilibrium of the humours and where the body substances perform normal digestive and excretory functions as well as gratifying the senses, mind and soul as a result of living a pure life.

Impurity and bodily pollution are not only the ultimate cause of much organic illness, but also expose people to diabolic affliction and cut them off from divine protection. The state of the body, gross as well as subtle, thus provides an index of the state of the soul, the Self. The wealth of the yogi is his two-fold body and it is by an absolute mastery of it that he can achieve salvation.

The gross body is said to have three possible fates: it can be eaten as carrion

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A religious cremation on the banks of the Ganges near Patna in northeastern India.

and reduced to excrement; it can be buried and turned into maggots; or it can be burnt and reduced to ashes. The putrefaction of the body is regarded as particularly repellent by Hindus, and incineration is viewed as the most acceptable fate since it is the swiftest way of recycling the five elements of which the body is composed. The body particles of the dead return to be shared with their kinsfolk and the soul is reborn. A Hindu is never entirely new when born and never entirely lost when dead. ■

Some Islamic thinkers believe that cultivation of the senses can lead to God

The garden of delights

BY ABDELWAHAB MEDDEB

According to the *Book of the Ladder of Mahomet*, as the Prophet was beginning his "night journey" from Mecca to Jerusalem, a very beautiful woman "clad in raiment of every imaginable colour" called out to him. He stopped and allowed her to draw near to him, then went disdainfully on his way. Whereupon his guide, the angel Gabriel, told him that the woman with her garments of many colours represented the world with its manifold delights, and that "because you waited for her, your people shall be granted more solace and more delights than any other people that has been or shall be."

This anecdote, taken from a medieval work of fiction that was translated from Arabic into Latin, Spanish and French in the thirteenth century, has more to tell us than any of the standard works of law or theology. Islam had the reputation of being the religion of enjoyment, a religion that called upon its followers not to spurn earthly pleasures but to delight in them as God's blessed gift to humankind.

The promise held out by Islam to believers seems to be that of a garden overflowing with everything to gratify the senses. This was the charge laid against Islam in the inter-religious disputes that raged in the Middle Ages, especially in Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain). The late thirteenth-century Catalan theologian Ramon Llull, for instance, makes such charges in his *Book of the Three Sages*, in which a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim take turns in vaunting the merits of their respective religions to a pagan.

Such enjoyment of earthly delights in the name of God was, on the other hand, much appreciated by nineteenth-century Western writers and artists who visited the East. This experience took them outside of their Judaeo-Christian education, which seemed either to repudiate the pleasures of the flesh or to regard them as base instincts that ought to be eliminated. Reacting against the prudery prevailing in their own countries, they saw in Islam an alternative life-style, around which grew the myth of an Orient where nihilism and denial of the flesh were unknown.

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche, who acclaimed this worship of the body, recalled that the first thing the Christians did after recapturing Córdoba was to brick up the city's 700 hammams. These bathhouses, which were the latter-day equivalent of the public baths of Roman Antiquity and which reflected the central place accorded in Islam to the care of the body, were seen by a Christian morality based on asceticism, abstinence and penitence as places of debauchery and depravity.

For their part, many writers succumbed to the charms of Arab erotic literature. The *Thousand and One Nights* had been well known since the late seventeenth century, but the French translation by Antoine Galland had been expurgated, the crude or downright pornographic passages being toned down in keeping with the classical principle of decorum. The fact is that Arab and Muslim authors were not afraid to write about wild sexual abandon and the transports of delight, which was why at the beginning of the twentieth century Mardrus thought it necessary to retranslate these tales, in so doing even exaggerating their sexual rhetoric. ▸

"The Lovers", a detail from a 19th-century Iranian edition of the *Thousand and One Nights*.

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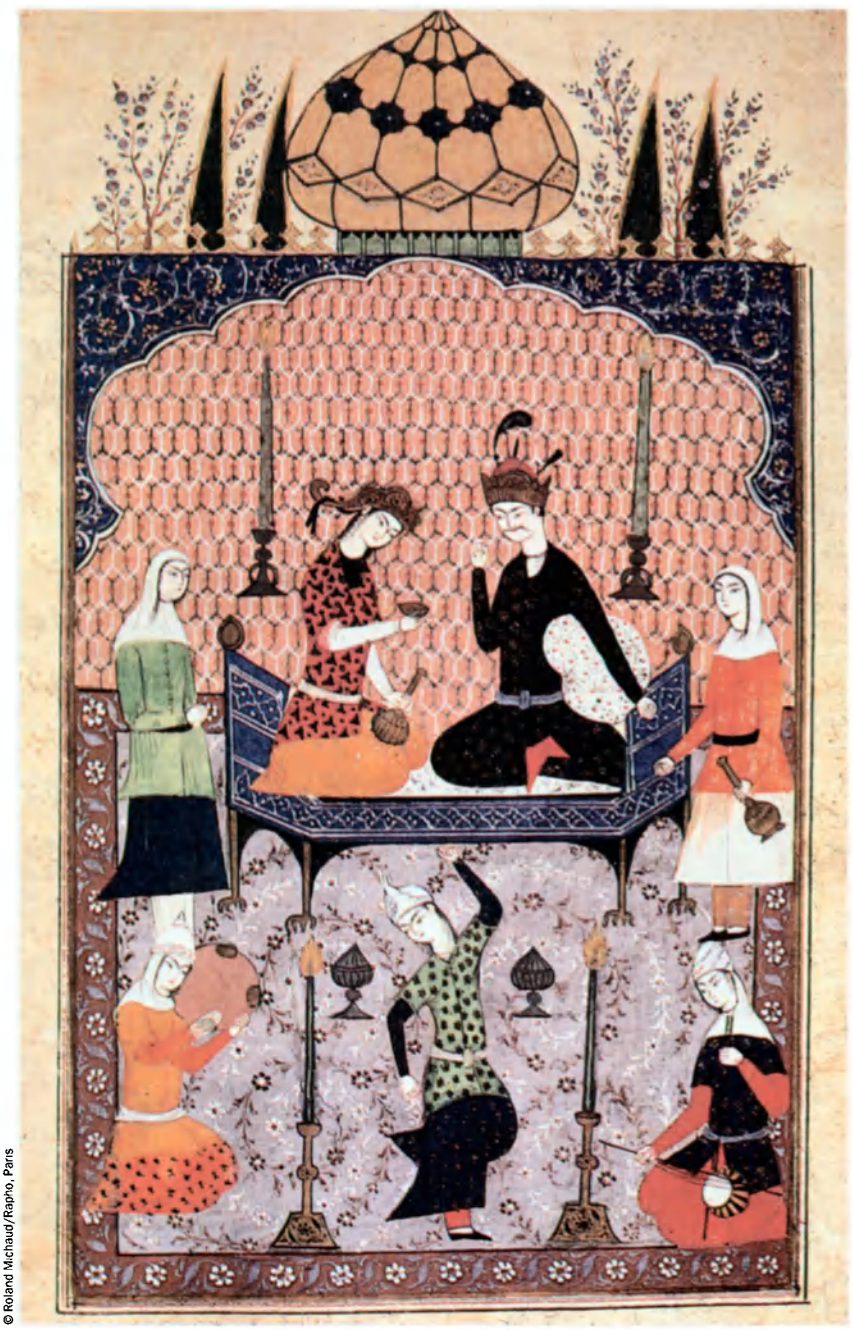
Such exaggeration is a measure of the spell cast by this different world, where prudery was unknown and people made love in the name of God. The fin-de-siècle aesthetes' ideas of the sensualism of the East and of Islam was confirmed by their discovery of *The Perfumed Garden*, an erotic treatise that was written in the fourteenth century by a theologian born in southern Tunisia, the famous Shaykh Nefzawi, and the anonymous nineteenth-century French translation of which is reputed to have been reworked by Guy de Maupassant.

Their ideas were in fact scarcely exaggerated: the Murcia-born Andalusian theosopher Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240) believed that those of a perspicacious mind could discern revelations behind all forms of beauty and derive enjoyment from them, and that such was the secret of spiritual experience. Did not the Hadith proclaim that "God is beautiful and He loves beauty"? Within each thing of beauty there lies concealed an image of God that the individual may perceive through a lovely woman, a handsome youth, a garment of well-matched colours, a harmoniously proportioned object, a stirring song, a well-seasoned dish, architecture that creates a musical interplay of light and shadow, a courtyard where a tinkling fountain overflows into its basin, or a bed of flowers in a shady garden fragrant with the scents of spring.

In short, the presence of God is to be sought through the senses: all things that appeal to the senses are ways whereby God may be glimpsed and the mental image of God may be formed. This conception may explain how it is that the principle of beauty finds its way into the most prosaic objects in use in the most mundane circumstances, and it is perhaps because of this belief in the immanence of beauty that the decorative arts and crafts flourished at that time.

Again according to Ibn al-Arabi, however, it is in the carnal act itself that the supreme revelation is granted. Through the mystery of the female orgasm, through its very excess, the individual is immersed in the image of God. In the love-making of two people, man and woman, the presence of a third, God Himself, is thus made manifest. This accounts for the extreme importance Ibn al-Arabi attaches to physical love: it is through physical love that spiritual love is achieved, it is through the sexual act, by the transmission of the elixir of carnal pleasure, that humans rise to the height of divine love. Ibn al-Arabi quotes another tradition from the Hadith in support of his interpretation: the Prophet said "Three things have I loved in this world: perfume, women and prayer". The shape of things conducive to the gratification of the senses and the call to fulfil the obligation of worship are thus set forth side by side in Holy Writ. ■

Music and dancing. An illustration from a 17th-century anthology of Persian poetry.



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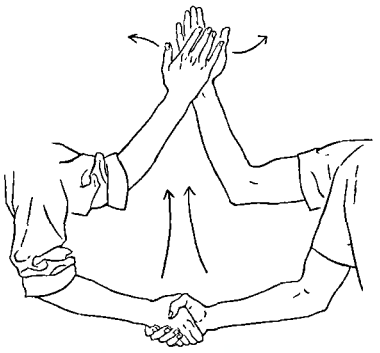
Body language

Often more eloquent than words, gestures constitute a rich medium of expression that varies from culture to culture

Greeting

RUBBING NOSES

Meaning: Friendly greeting.
Description: The nose-tip is brought into contact with the nose-tip of another person or with another part of his/her head.
Locality: New Zealand (Maoris), Finland (Lapps) and North Africa and the Middle East (Bedouin). Also among Malays, Polynesians, Melanesians and Inuit.

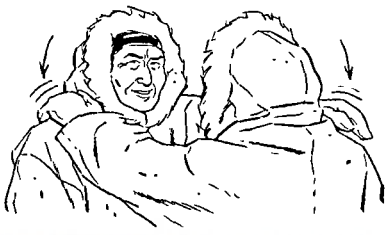


RISING HANDSHAKE

Meaning: Greeting.
Description: After a traditional handshake the clasped right hands are raised high in the air where they are disengaged.
Locality: Africa, especially among the Bantu.

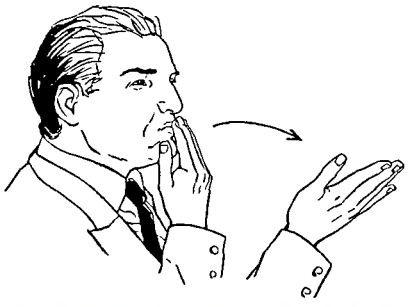
WIGGLING THE THUMB AND LITTLE FINGER

Meaning: Friendly greeting.
Description: The arm is raised, and then the hand is wiggled gently with the thumb and little finger extended and the other fingers curled.
Locality: The Hawaiian Islands



SLAP ON THE SHOULDER

Meaning: Greeting
Description: When two people meet, they slap each other playfully on the shoulder.
Locality: Inuit communities.



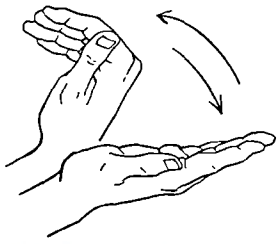
BLOWING A KISS WITH THE FINGERTIPS

Meaning: Greeting
Description: The fingertips brush the lips, and the hand is then moved away from the mouth as the bunched fingers are spread.
Locality: Especially widespread on the Mediterranean islands of Malta, Sicily, Sardinia and Corfu. Also common in Portugal (but not Spain) and in Sweden (but not Denmark).

HANDS TOGETHER

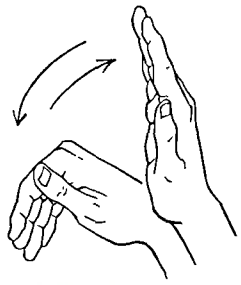
Meaning: Greeting
Description: Palms joined, fingers pointing upwards, in front of the chest. Usually accompanied with a slight bow of the head.
Locality: Asia.

Directional signals



BECKONING HAND (1)

Meaning: Come here!
Description: Upward movements of the hand with the palm up.
Locality: British Isles, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France and the former Yugoslavia.

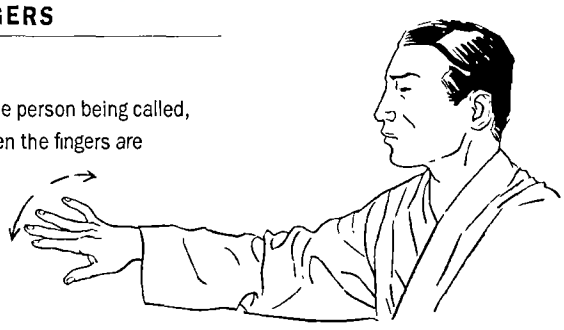


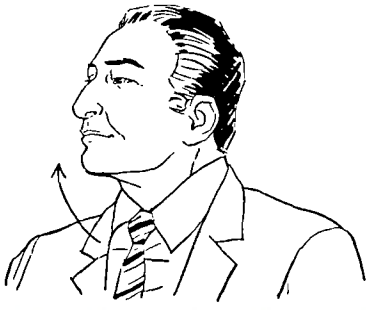
BECKONING HAND (2)

Meaning: Come here!
Description: Downward movements of the hand, with the palm down.
Locality: Spain, Portugal, Italy, Malta, Tunisia, Greece and Turkey.

BECKONING FINGERS

Meaning: Come here!
Description: The arm is extended towards the person being called, palm downwards, the wrist slightly bent. Then the fingers are fluttered.
Locality: Japan



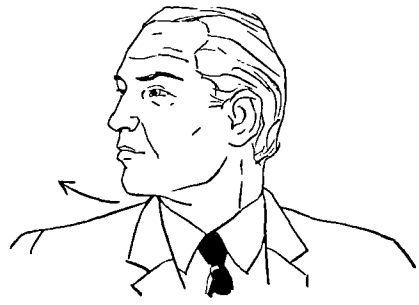


BECKONING HEAD

Meaning: Come here!
Description: The head is jerked backwards.
Locality: Widespread.

POINTING LIPS

Meaning: To indicate a direction.
Description: The lips are protruded in a certain direction, the head often being slightly turned in the same direction.
Locality: The Philippines, parts of South and Central America, certain African tribes and among the Amerindians.



POINTING CHIN

Meaning: Over there.
Description: The chin is thrust briefly in a particular direction.
Locality: Widespread.

Source: ***Bodytalk, The Meaning of Human Gestures*****, Desmond Morris, Crown Trade Paperbacks, New York, 1994.**
More than 600 gestures are illustrated, described and explained in this remarkable guide to human gestures from all around the world.

"No" signals

HAND FAN

Meaning: No.
Description: The open right hand, palm turned to the left, is moved back and forth in front of the face, like a fan.
Locality: Japan.

EYEBROW MOVEMENT

Meaning: No!
Description: The eyebrows are raised and lowered rapidly once. The facial expression is usually serious or annoyed.
Locality: Greece

FLICKING THE CHIN

Meaning: No!
Description: The fingers brush the chin several times, and the head is tilted backwards.
Locality: Italy south of Naples, Sicily and Sardinia. Also common in Malta and Corfu.

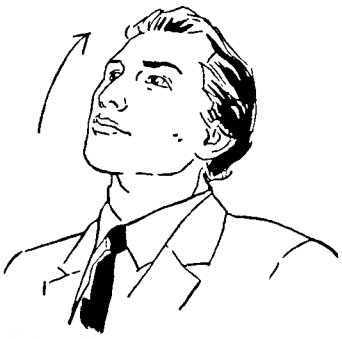
Mixed signals

NOSE SCREW (1)

Meaning: Drunk.
Description: The thumb and the index finger circle the nose, and the hand is then screwed round through an arc.
Locality: France.

NOSE SCREW (2)

Meaning: Never mind!
Description: As no. 1, left.
Locality: East Africa.

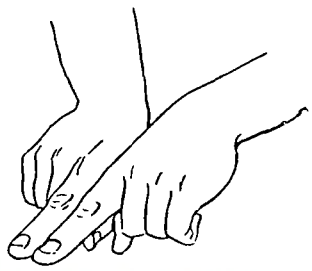


HEAD TOSSING (1)

Meaning: No!
Description: The head is tilted vigorously backwards.
Locality: Most Arab cultures. Known in Europe as the "Greek no", it is widespread in Turkey, Corfu, Malta, Sicily and southern Italy.

HEAD TOSSING (2)

Meaning: Yes!
Description: As no. 1, left.
Locality: Ethiopia.



FOREFINGERS TOGETHER (1)

Meaning: Agreement.
Description: The two index fingers are placed side by side.
Locality: Middle East.

INDEX FINGERS TOGETHER (2)

Meaning: Close friendship.
Description: As no. 1, left.
Locality: North Africa

Drawings Unesco/Patrick Deubelbeiss

COMMENTARY

Federico Mayor

Science and society (2)

During the Cold War years, the value of science and technology tended to be construed in terms of its military and economic applications. While this enabled research in many specialities to enjoy a golden age of generous funding in some countries, it tended to widen the gap between the rich and the poor nations. The ending of this chapter of history has brought an opportunity to base civilization on peace, not on war. The question is whether we are as ready to pay the price of peace as we were to pay the price of war.

The close co-operation between science and government that is needed can flourish only in free societies, so it is encouraging to observe the growth of democracy in recent years in all parts of the world. The twentieth century has so far shown us both the apogee and the demise of the totalitarian state. It was Erich Fromm who described totalitarianism as "the escape from freedom". Totalitarianism promised—in exchange for the surrender of personal freedom—a guaranteed utopia that would justify the sufferings of the present. In the march towards this utopia, science and technology were given a vanguard role.

For a while, and so long as technology remained predictable, centrally planned economies demonstrated a brutal ability to ape the successes achieved elsewhere, and even exceed them. Many Western intellectuals who visited the Soviet Union in the 1930s compared the purposive activity there with the apathy of the democracies and made no secret of their preference. In a world dominated by coal and steel, the command economy did achieve some successes, at the cost of great human misery. But when the focus of development shifted to industries based on new knowledge in electronics, biology and biotechnology, the price of suppressing free thought and action had to be paid. The centrally planned economies, for all their claims to be "scientific", lost the battle because they used science as an instrument, obscuring its true nature. The lesson is that nobody, however powerful or well informed, can know for certain which scientific ideas will shape the world of tomorrow. Only by allowing scientists the freedom of action to go where their curiosity leads can we be sure that science will flourish and our economies will flourish with it.

Beyond the market

The problems faced by societies in transition from oppression cannot be solved simply by appeals to the free market, effective as it has so often proved to be. The free market—the so-called Invisible Hand—is no guarantee of meeting long-term needs or of ensuring the best use of human resources. The question is whether we possess adequate knowledge to devise sound methods of moving from centrally planned economies to a freer but nonetheless humane market. A longer-term view, based on investing now to prevent future catastrophes, is required, both for practical and ethical reasons. This is in my view most important, for those who have been suffering under the shadow of oppression or extreme poverty will be very disappointed if we offer them only the rules of the free market.

The success of science is based upon shared knowledge. Only by open publication of results and the mutual testing of ideas can we be sure that we are moving along the right lines. The extent to which knowledge is shared, both within nations and between nations, will determine our ultimate success. And yet the community at large, all too often including its leaders, remains years behind in its understanding of the directions in which science is moving.

Scientific illiteracy is one of the key issues we face. Elected leaders have neither the time nor the resources to grasp biological or environmental complexity, although they may be required to make decisions that will determine the educational, scientific and ecological priorities for years to come. Voters are unable to make rational decisions on issues that require basic scien-

tific knowledge, because all too often they have never been provided with that knowledge. An unprepared community cannot truly govern itself or plan for its children's future.

We live in a society that depends on science and technology without really understanding it. When basic scientific knowledge was tested in one survey, it was found that less than a third of Britons and 43 per cent of Americans knew that electrons are smaller than atoms. Almost a third of the British respondents, and a quarter of the American ones, believed that antibiotics kill viruses as well as bacteria. I am not seeking here to be critical of any particular nation: there is no reason to suppose that these results would be any different if the surveys had been conducted elsewhere.

Achieving scientific literacy

Nor is there anything new about antipathy to and ignorance of science and technology. We tend to think of the nineteenth century as a period of confident expansion, ruled by engineers. But even then a strong undercurrent of opposition thrived. It is easy to laugh at the Duke of Wellington, who opposed the development of railways because, he said, "they would enable the lower orders to go uselessly wandering about the country". But he wasn't alone. The French novelist Gustave Flaubert listed the four greatest misdeeds of modern civilization as "railways, factories, chemists and mathematicians". Yet he happily used the railway as a convenient way of meeting his friend Louise Colet, who lived in Paris, while he lived near Rouen.

Many of us harbour the same double standard: we enjoy the benefits of technology while remaining largely ignorant of its inner workings. We have a society where, in Martin Weiner's words, there is outward acceptance of modernity without inner conviction. Few people know, or very much care, what goes on under the bonnets of their cars, or at the other end of the high-tension cables that supply their houses with electricity. To them it is all a bit of a conjuring trick.

It is clearly impossible to provide every person with a profound understanding of all the important and controversial areas of science and technology; impossible because even scientists themselves do not possess it. A cell biologist does not understand particle physics; a metallurgist is unlikely to have more than a limited grasp of genetics; and hardly anybody understands the wonderful world of high mathematics. What singles out scientists and engineers is not their knowledge of fields other than their own, but the conviction that they could understand these other subjects if they wanted to, a confidence that is not generally shared by non-scientists.

This is the confidence we must try to spread more widely. The evidence is that when scientific ideas address people's concerns and interests, they show an impressive ability to locate information and translate it into forms they find useful. An interesting example of this is the annual Aids conferences, ten of which have now been held since the disease first challenged the scientific community to find an answer in the mid-1980s. While ostensibly gatherings to discuss research in progress, the conferences also involve many people who are HIV-positive, or who care for Aids sufferers. These people are not scientists, but because of the immediacy of the issues for them, they rapidly become familiar with all the latest research in the fields of virology and immunology, two of the most difficult of scientific disciplines. Aids activists make life very difficult for scientists, with their sometimes unreasonable demands for faster progress. But they also make the whole field more stimulating, and help to ensure that research is focused on the real problems.

This gap between what scientists know and what the public understands is one of the greatest threats to clear-sighted science and public policy. In 1931 Albert Einstein said, "Concern for man himself and his fate must always form the chief interest for all technical endeavour . . . in order that the creations of our minds shall be a blessing and not a curse to mankind. Never forget this is the midst of your diagrams and equations."

On the scientific side we in the laboratories and classrooms must share in the blame for the lack of diffusion of our findings and concerns through the communities in which we live. On the other side of it, however, the political leadership—local, national and international—must also bear the responsibility of leaving science in a ghetto of narrow specialities, despite its central importance in the world around us. The responsibility for scientific illiteracy is shared and the solution to a continued state of chronic ignorance or misplaced sensationalism must be found at the meeting point between scientists and community leaders.

Three 'musts'

There are no easy answers, but it is clear that scientific literacy must try to provide at least three things.

First, a whole picture of the different issues. Only a holistic approach can help us evaluate the different options open to us. One example is that of energy sources: the costs and risks of a power station are evaluated by most economists as if coal were a renewable resource, picked from the tree like an orange. Coal, however, is not renewable. Here are two more examples. Can we seriously address the problems of developing countries without taking into account the terms of an equitable international trade? Can we try to improve the education of rural women without providing the villages with wells and drills for obtaining a pure water supply?

Secondly, it also means a far-sighted vision, bearing in mind that in all the most important questions the most fragile and ephemeral factor—biologically, at least—is the decision-maker. Mortality is part of human existence, but we must learn to think ahead for the intergenerational human rights of our children and their children.

Thirdly, we need a historical and global perspective, in order not to forget that there is a past which has forged our own behaviour and which, when consciously understood, can be used to changed our ways of being. Nothing is determined by some mechanical "logic" of history: everything depends on what we do in the here and now. This is the legacy we can give to our descendants. ■

TE WAHIPOUNAMU

New Zealand's pristine wilderness

by Ann-Marie Johnson

Extraordinary flora and fauna flourish in Southwest New Zealand, one of the world's most spectacular wilderness areas, which was placed on the World Heritage List in 1990.

The Maori people see more than a mountain when they look at the snow-covered heights of New Zealand's highest peak. Members of the Ngai Tahu tribe see their ancestor, Aoraki, first born son of Raki, the Sky Parent. In mythical times, Aoraki was shipwrecked after his canoe overturned as he sailed in the South Pacific. Trying to save themselves, he and his crew clambered to the high side of the hull . . . and remained there for eternity. Today, the canoe forms the South Island of New Zealand, while Aoraki and his crew, still clinging to the hull, have become the great mountain chain known as the Southern Alps.

In due course, Aoraki's son, Tuterakiwhanoa, came searching for his father. Finding the remains of the shipwreck had turned to stone, he began to reshape it into a suitable home for his human descendants. Other atua (demi-gods) with skills in landscaping, fisheries, birds and horticulture helped him, creating the South Island eventually inhabited by the Ngai Tahu.

The results of their ancestors' labours can be seen today in one of the world's most spectacular and pristine wilderness areas, south-west New Zealand, known in Maori as Te Wahipounamu. Since the atua created this vast region, man has had virtually no impact on it. In fact, no humans at all lived there until about 1,000 years ago. For millennia, the only sounds to be heard were the rustling of leaves, the rushing water of mountain streams and birdsong echoing through the densely luxuriant dark-green bush. In the absence of predatory mammals, plants did not need to develop defence mechanisms, some birds lost the power to fly and did not develop the bright plumage seen in the birds of more dangerous countries. Unique species evolved, their development hindered only by the effects of the climate.

THE PLACE OF THE GREENSTONE

When the Maori arrived, they found a land rich in resources they could use to sustain their existence and around which they could build their culture. Abundant birds and fish provided food, the bush gave them timber. But the most valuable prize was hewn from the rock of Aoraki's mythical canoe and was reflected in the name the Maori gave the region: Te Wahipounamu, or the place of the greenstone.

Greenstone (nephrite) was the most precious of all stone to the Maori. It was used for tools, weapons and ornaments, and in some forms is believed to have spiritual force. It was certainly the most important item the Ngai

The Fox glacier, on the western slopes of the Southern Alps.

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© F Zuardon/Jacana, Paris

Tahu had to trade with other tribes, and the stone from Te Wahipounamu was spread throughout New Zealand.

In 1642 the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman became the first European to sight Te Wahipounamu, but no one landed there until the arrival of the English explorer James Cook in 1773. He and his crew spent six weeks in Dusky Sound, clearing a small part of the native forest to make way for an astronomical observatory. The tree stumps left behind can still be seen today.

But the first real effects of European settlement were not felt until more than twenty years later, after sealers began to harvest the fur seals found along the coast. By 1820 the seal population had been almost wiped out. Fortunately they were given legal protection in 1875, and the population has since recovered to the point where there are now thousands spread along the coastline.

Europeans were also largely responsible for perhaps the most devastating impact on the wilderness of Te Wahipounamu. The introduction of browsing and predatory mammals such as red deer, the Australian brush-tailed possum, rabbits and rodents wrought havoc in an ecosystem ill-equipped to defend itself against such creatures. Several bird species have become extinct, while others are among the world's most endangered. Some palatable plants were eliminated from accessible areas and severe damage occurred in many places.

But the untrained eye does not notice such things. Te Wahipounamu's remoteness and isolation have saved it from the worst encroachments of human civilization, and there are still areas where ▶

The Te Wahipounamu wilderness includes several national parks and nature reserves. Above, Mt. Cook National Park.

© J P Varin/Visage/Jacana, Paris

The kea (*Nestor notabilis*), a parrot endemic to New Zealand, is found in the mountains of the South Island.

© S Fautre/Ask Images, Paris

A waterfall on one of the many rivers that run through the forest.

© J. P. Varin/Jacana, Paris

The kiwi (*Apteryx australis*), a flightless bird with rudimentary wings, lives in New Zealand's dense forests. It nests on the ground and lays enormous eggs.

human beings have never set foot. The first major land-based explorations were carried out in the second half of the nineteenth century, but a number of the remote valleys were still considered to be unexplored as late as the 1970s.

ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS

Today experienced trampers can find huge expanses which offer neither tracks nor huts nor any other sign of human inhabitation, giving them the opportunity to revel in the rare and sometimes frightening sense of complete solitude. With no roads, houses, traffic or noise, walkers easily find themselves overwhelmed by their insignificance in the midst of the magnificent mountain and forest scenery that surrounds them. They are left to depend on their own resources in the knowledge that they are hours away from outside help.

But less hardy—or more gregarious—visitors can enjoy Te Wahipounamu's wonders in a little more comfort. The world-famous Milford Track offers guided or independent walks of two to five days through spectacular scenery, as do several other less well-known trails, such as the Routeburn, Greenstone or Holyford tracks. Numerous shorter walks, ranging from thirty minutes to a full day, are spread along the length of Te Wahipounamu, giving safe and easy access to the wilderness. Several of these walks have been equipped with informative displays to help explorers understand the surrounding landforms, wildlife or vegetation.

The rare and endangered takahe (*Notornis Mantelli*), a flightless bird living in the forests of New Zealand's South Island.

© J. Cancalosi/Jacana, Paris

But such displays cannot tell all there is to know about Te Wahipounamu. The region's 2.6 million hectares are breathtaking in the extent and variety of their natural beauty. Forming fully a tenth of New Zealand's entire landmass, the area is united only by its diversity. Changes in vegetation and scenery which span thousands of kilometres on the continents are compressed into an area only about 450 km long and between 40 to 90 km wide.

The area contains New Zealand's highest mountains, longest glaciers, tallest forests, wildest rivers and gorges, most rugged coastline, deepest fjords and lakes, and largest populations of forest birds. It is home to the world's largest buttercup, the Mt. Cook Buttercup; possibly the highest sea cliff, Mitre Peak; the world's only alpine parrot, the friendly but mischievous kea; and the total wild population of the rare takahe.

There are dozens of bird species in Te Wahipounamu, including many found only in New Zealand. Among the best known is the kea, which shows no fear of intruders, and in fact often seems to actively seek contact with humans—often to their discomfort. With its strong hooked beak, this inquisitive bird can destroy sneakers left outside overnight, canvas or vinyl bags and anything else it decides to take an interest in.

New Zealand's smallest bird, the rifleman, lives in the region's mountain forests, and the tiny rock wren can be spotted in alpine areas. One of New Zealand's few alpine birds, the rock wren survives the harsh mountain winters by sheltering in openings within the rock debris beneath the snow. Further down the mountains, the beautifully echoing song of the aptly named bellbird, or korimako, is commonly heard, and careful observers can also see the tui, bush robin, flocks of screeching kaka (forest parrot) and kakariki (parakeet). Tawaki or Fjordland crested penguins inhabit parts of the coastline, while about 50 pairs of the beautiful kotuku (white heron) regularly nest at the northern end of the region. Although common in other countries, the kotuku is rare in New Zealand and has great spiritual significance for the Maori, who see it as a symbol of all that is beautiful and rare.

SURVIVORS FROM A LOST CONTINENT

Scientists tell us that Te Wahipounamu is the best modern representation of the ancient flora and fauna of Gondwanaland, the southern super-continent that broke up to form New Zealand, South America, India, Africa, Antarctica and Australia. New Zealand broke off 80 to 100 million years ago before the appearance of marsupials and other mammals, and the country's subsequent long isolation enabled ancient life forms to survive to a far greater extent than elsewhere. The great forests of rimu, southern beech and kahikatea are the closest links with Gondwanaland, as are unique birds like the flightless kiwi, which New Zealanders have adopted as their national symbol.

The magnificent chain of the Southern Alps lies along the boundary of the Pacific and Indo-Australian plates, two of the six

gigantic plates making up the earth's crust. This is one of only three places in the world where a major tectonic plate boundary can be found on land. Earthquakes caused by the collision of these two plates have helped New Zealand gain its reputation as the "Shaky isles", but the fault line has also given rise to a dramatic landscape of deep fjords and high mountains.

The glaciers of Te Wahipounamu are also evidence of the movements under the earth's surface. These glaciers, particularly those named Fox and Franz-Josef, were among New Zealand's first tourist attractions for those wealthy enough to undertake the arduous trip into the wilderness. But the movement of the glaciers is so rapid that visitors a century ago saw a different sight to those we see today as both glaciers are 2 to 3 km shorter than when they were first surveyed in the 1890s. Fox Glacier is 13 km long, while Franz-Josef is 10 km, and both flow very quickly, averaging as much as 1.5 metres a day, although rates of up to 8 m a day have been recorded. Nearby, the 28 km Tasman Glacier, which flows from Mt. Cook (Aoraki), is one of the longest glaciers in the southern hemisphere.

The glaciers are very sensitive to climatic changes, advancing during periods of heavy snowfalls and receding under less severe weather conditions. However, Te Wahipounamu's weather is rarely extreme, even though the region lies across one of the world's windiest latitudes, the Roaring Forties. The large amounts of ocean surrounding New Zealand moderate temperatures, so the climate is temperate and avoids major seasonal changes. The Southern Alps form a barrier to the prevailing moisture-laden westerly winds coming off the Tasman Sea, with the result that the West Coast is subject to heavy and sometimes violent rainstorms at any time of the year. The coastal lowlands receive 3,000 to 5,000 mm of rain a year and this level rises with the terrain, so that the western flank of the Southern Alps can receive more than 10,000 mm a year, although much of it falls as snow.

Today, the Ngai Tahu are not the only people who have reason to be grateful that Aoraki was shipwrecked in an isolated part of the South Pacific. Visitors from around the world, as well as New Zealanders themselves, are increasingly discovering the magnificence of this untouched part of the world. Even in this age of easy travel, Te Wahipounamu's remoteness means that tourist operators and administrators have had time to benefit from the lessons learned from the effects of uncontrolled tourist development elsewhere. Although recreational use of the region is generally encouraged, the activities that are available, such as boating, fishing, hunting and mountaineering, have little impact on the environment.

Growing awareness of the importance of conserving the world's few remaining areas of untouched wilderness ensures that Te Wahipounamu will continue to be preserved as far as possible in its pristine state. If Tuterakiwhonoa ever returns to survey his handiwork, he will not find Te Wahipounamu very different from the way he left it. ■

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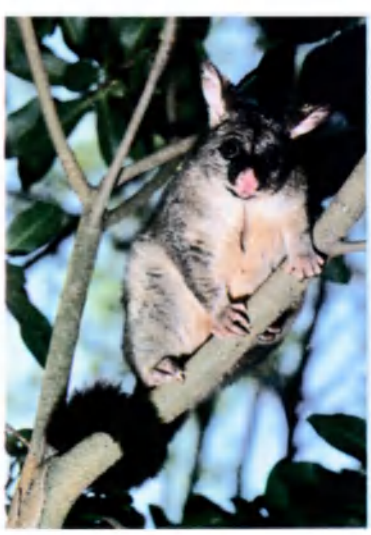
Pancake Rocks, Punakaiki.



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A brush-tailed opossum (*Trichosurus T. Vulpecula*).

GREENWATCH

Gardens: a cultural flowering

by France Bequette

"As the expression of the direct affinity between civilization and nature, and as a place of enjoyment suited to meditation or repose, the garden thus acquires the cosmic significance of an idealized image of the world, a 'paradise' in the etymological sense of the term, and yet a testimony to a culture, a style, an age, and often to the originality of a creative artist." So says the Charter of Florence, which was drawn up in 1981 by the International Committee on Historic Gardens and Sites, a specialist organ of ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (see page 46).

Gardening is a universal art. In the Bible the Garden of Eden was created by God and tended by Adam, a place of delight to which he longed to return after he had been expelled from it. In the Qur'an, paradise is a garden rich in pastures, fountains, trees and delicious fruit. In the arid desert, verdant oases are watering places that make life possible. In China, the fabulous K'un-lun mountains of the west, the gateway to heaven, were festooned with hanging gardens.

Unlike agriculture, which has a utilitarian purpose, gardening imposes a certain order on turbulent and unpredictable nature. This is what the park at Versailles has in common with a Japanese garden. "A garden," writes Belgian horticultural specialist René Pechère, "is a composition. It is always artificial. . . ." It is a mirror of the society which creates it.

Places of power and holiness

History offers many examples of rulers who wanted a magnificent park to provide a setting for their palaces and express their power. The Greek historian and philosopher Xenophon wrote admiringly of the paradise garden designed and cultivated by Cyrus the Younger (in about 420 B.C.), king of Persia. Love of gardens was at the core of the Persian world-view. Not only was gardening a part of the education of princes, it was taught to all schoolboys. Two hundred years earlier, one of the seven wonders of the world, the hanging gardens of Babylon, were planted on stepped terraces by Nebuchadrezzar II for his Persian-born wife, who missed the gardens of her native land.

Greece's rocky soil, warm climate and lack of water were not very propitious for gardening, and in any case luxuriant pleasure gardens associated with power and personal prestige would probably not have gone down well with a people enamoured of democracy. Gymnasia (schools) were established in Athenian parks for the common good. Plato shared a garden with his students and established the Academy there. The sacred groves familiar to the Greeks of Antiquity were wildernesses where divinities took refuge, and as a result were left untouched by human hand.

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The gardens of the Alhambra, Granada (Spain).

The gardens of Versailles Palace (France).

©Charles Lénars Paris

Egyptian gardens blended pleasure with productivity (wine, fruit, vegetables and papyrus). Exotic trees and flowers were imported very early on and enriched the country's natural plantlife. Gardens were laid out in geometric patterns imposed by the presence of irrigation ditches. A scale model of a garden with abundant plantlife, found in the tomb of Meket-Re in Thebes (1700 B.C.), shows a garden with a rectangular layout, surrounded by high walls that protected it from the desert sands and the Nile flood.

In ancient Rome gardens were made within the confines of villas. This example was followed in Europe during the Middle Ages. In those troubled times city dwellers planted their gardens inside rather than outside the town walls, and lords made gardens in the courtyards of their castles, where women grew vegetables and medicinal herbs, as did monks in monastery gardens. These enclosed places contrasted with cemeteries, which at that time were public meeting places where behaviour was free and easy, if not licentious. Located as they were next to churches, cemeteries continued until the 18th century to enjoy their medieval status as extra-territorial zones where the right of asylum associated with the church building was still enjoyed.

The Islamic heritage

In Spain, the Arabs began to create pleasure gardens in the 8th century. Thousands of them appeared in Andalusia. The Moorish gardens of Granada—the Alhambra and the Generalife—are still among the most beautiful in the world. In compliance with strict geometric patterns, they were divided into four quarters, representing the four elements. This pattern, often symbolically featured on carpets, was also found among the Moguls of India. In the 15th century the Muslim sultan Tamberlaine (Timur-Lang) used it in Samarkand. The vast extent of their gardens gave his successors real control of the land, and were invested with divine power by making the desert bloom.

In Italy during the same period gardens acquired a reputation for sensuality. They were places for celebrations, friendly meetings and intellectual and sexual freedom. They provided an image of a well tempered, well ordered universe in an eternal spring. Water played the major role in these Renaissance gardens. Carefully trimmed evergreen shrubs were sometimes used as mazes. Marble statuary from Antiquity had still not been dethroned by flowers.

The triumph of geometry

Italian artists who travelled through Europe inspired "French" gardens where architecture took pride of place over nature. Very strict geometric perspectives were used to show buildings to their best advantage. The gardens at Versailles, designed by André Le Nôtre, were inspired by the sun-symbol chosen by King Louis XIV, the main axes corresponding to the points of the compass. Flower beds edged with trimmed box hedges were planted. Garden specialist Gabrielle van Zuylen sees the influence of Versailles at Blenheim Palace in England, in St. Petersburg (Russia), at La Granja near Segovia (Spain) and in Caserta near Naples (Italy). Le ▶

An entrant in a contest for flower-decorated courtyards in Córdoba (Spain).

©Degas/Parra, Paris

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Detail from a 14th-century manuscript of the Latin translation of a medical treatise by the great Arab physician Abul Kasim (Latin Albucasis), who lived in Córdoba in the 10th century.

▶ Nôtre's radiating garden paths even served as inspiration for the town plan of Washington D. C.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the French garden came to be seen as too artificial and gave way to the English landscaped park style. Lovers of poetry and painting forsook straight lines in favour of "natural" landscapes composed of hills, woods, ponds and waterfalls. The Romantics liked their paintings to include ruins and mausoleums. The garden became a theatre set, expressing the aspirations of 18th-century man in search of knowledge.

Landscaped gardens: the Désert de Retz

The Désert de Retz, some 20 kilometres west of Paris, is an astonishing example of this in France (the word "désert" here being used to designate an isolated, "deserted" place). It is a landscaped garden which François Racine de Monville began to create on a 40-hectare site in 1774.

In a vale in the heart of Marly Forest, he built a house in the form of an ancient ruined column 15 metres in diameter. Visitors enter the park through a grotto which leads them on a kind of initiatory journey from the outside world into the "Désert". The park, which has an "English-style" layout, contains an open theatre and 17 small structures or "fabriques": an Egyptian-style obelisk and pyramid, a temple dedicated to the Greek god Pan and a votive altar and a tomb evoking ancient Rome. A Tartar tent stands on an "Island of Happiness", and beside a pond there is a Chinese house with outhouses and an enclosed garden, reflecting ideas of China current in France at that time.

This high spot of the Enlightenment attracted visitors from all over the world. Thomas Jefferson, for example, architect and future President of the United States, took inspiration from it for the University of Virginia in Charlottesville*. Visionary film-maker Abel Gance chose it as a setting for one of his films. The surrealists were fascinated by its mystery.

Perhaps gardens are a synthesis of all art forms. René Pechère believes that a garden is "architecture by virtue of its composition; sculpture via the art of landscaping; painting via the effect of coloured trees; music through the rhythms of its composition; poetry, theatre and even dance".

Our round-the-world garden tour will be continued in the next issue. ■

* See *Mr. Jefferson's Dream House* by Francis Leary in the February 1997 issue of the *UNESCO Courier*, "Radio, a future for sound".—Editor

FURTHER READING:

✓ *Plants in Garden History*, Penelope Hobhouse, Pavilion Books, 1992.

✓ *European Gardens*, a journal published by The Historic Gardens Foundation (London) as part of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Programme, Strasbourg (France). In English and French.

✓ *Tous les jardins du monde*, Gabrielle van Zuylen, "Découvertes", Gallimard, 1994.

✓ *Jardins dessinés, Grammaire des jardins*, René Pechère, editor. Atelier d'art urbain, 1987.

initiatives

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was founded in 1965 at Warsaw (Poland), as a result of the adoption the year before of the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, widely known as the Venice Charter. It is the only international non-governmental organization that works to promote the application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques to the conservation of monuments and sites. With IUCN (the World Conservation Union), ICOMOS advises UNESCO on the nomination of new sites to the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS has 5,300 members in 88 countries. They include architects, art historians, archaeologists, town-planners, engineers, librarians and administrators, and constitute ICOMOS National Committees in their respective countries. ICOMOS has 15 international committees, specializing in fields such as stained-glass windows, cave painting, and historic gardens and sites. Each year ICOMOS organizes symposia on technical themes, e.g. open-air museums, the restoration of cave complexes, the conservation of wood, stone or adobe, photogrammetry, and the reconstitution of historic gardens.

ICOMOS has a well-stocked documentation centre (more than 20,000 documents) that is open to the public. It produces a range of publications, including the proceedings of national and international symposia, technical dossiers, reviews (*ICOMOS Bulletin*, *ICOMOS Information* and *Monumentum*) and bibliographical and thematic catalogues of all reference works available at the Documentation Centre.

In order to increase awareness of heritage conservation issues, ICOMOS and UNESCO have declared 18 April International Day for Monuments and Sites. ■

ICOMOS publications may be ordered from:
ICOMOS Documentation Centre, 49-51, rue de la Fédération, 75015 Paris, France.
Tel.: (33) (0)1 45 67 67 70. Fax: (33) (0)1 45 66 06 22.

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THE AEGEAN ISLANDS, EUROPEAN CULTURAL PARK

A number of island groups in the Agean Sea are considered the cradle of Greek civilization and have remained virtually unchanged for centuries. With UNESCO support, the Greek government has decided to protect them, and to symbolically declare the Aegean Archipelago "Cultural Park of Europe". Its pilot "Aegean Archipelago" action programme will seek to manage historical centres, modernize museums and renovate and protect monuments. The programme is part of the World Decade for Cultural Development. ■

RISING CO_2 HITS THE FOREST

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels in the atmosphere have been rising since the mid-19th century as a result of increased human activity. The French National Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA) has discovered that one effect of the rise has been an abnormal increase in the diameter of certain trees in temperate forest ecosystems. For example, the average diameter of silver firs in the Vosges massif (France) has increased by 160% since 1850, and that of the pedunculate oak in Lorraine by 55%. The balance of certain forest ecosystems may be affected, and this is bound to have repercussions on forest management and the timber industry. ■

TONGA TURNS TO PUMPKINS

The Kingdom of Tonga, an island nation in the Pacific with some 104,000 inhabitants, is trying hard to improve its balance of payments. After abandoning the idea of incinerating millions of used tyres, which would have had a disastrous effect on air quality, Tongans turned to growing pumpkins for sale to the Japanese, who insist that their pumpkins must be perfectly shaped. Tonga is hoping eventually to export 8,000 tons a year, but for the moment the island kingdom is groaning under the weight of imperfectly shaped pumpkins. ■

© G Hofer/Jacana, Paris

EUROPE'S CULTURAL ROUTES

The Council of Europe's Cultural Routes programme, launched in 1987, seeks to throw light on the itineraries along which Europe's main religious, artistic, scientific, technical and commercial trends and movements have spread. Themes chosen include Celtic routes, monastic influence routes, the silk routes, and rural habitat. Within the framework of the programme, a guidebook devoted to the routes leading to Santiago de Compostela, the famous pilgrimage centre in northwest Spain, has recently been published in French. Lavishly illustrated with photos and maps, *Guide européen des chemins de Compostelle*, by Jean Bourdarias and Michel Wasielewski (Fayard, Paris, 1996), gives details of 9 different routes starting in various European countries.. ■

For further information:
Cultural Routes Secretariat,
Council of Europe, 67075
Strasbourg Cedex, France.
Tel: (33) (0)3 88 41 35 37;
Fax: (33) (0)3 88 41 27 88.

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NOT SO PROTECTED SPECIES

The ortolan (*Emberizia hortulana*) is a little bird in great danger. Its numbers are thought to be declining in Europe, where it is a protected species covered by the European Union's "Birds" Directive. But although ortolan hunting is thus strictly forbidden, the bird is threatened with extinction in France. Each year an estimated 50,000 ortolans are killed in southwest France as a gastronomic delicacy. ■

CONSERVATION AND THE COMMUNITY

In Africa wildlife conservation areas are often set up to the detriment of the local people, who are not consulted. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is trying to avoid this error in Namibia. In collaboration with a non-governmental organization, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), WWF has established a network of community game guards who are directly responsible for keeping tabs on wild animals and poaching in their areas, and, when wildlife numbers permit, for organizing hunts and distributing the meat. Villagers are also being directly involved in tourism so that they can benefit from it while insisting on respect for their culture. ■

TERMINATING TERMITES

Hien Lam Cac temple (Soul Porch) in Viet Nam, one of the monuments in the Imperial City of Hue included on the World Heritage list in 1993, is infested with termites. Insecticides used so far to eradicate the 200-odd species of white ants that are playing havoc with the wooden buildings and the crops outside have been highly toxic but ineffective. To save the Hue monuments, UNESCO has appealed to a petro-chemical company that has developed a selective insecticide which is effective in small doses and does not pollute water. ■

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ISABELLE LEYMARIE TALKS TO

RIDO BAYONNE

Versatile instrumentalist, band-leader and singer, Rido Bayonne is a musical jack of all trades who blends Bantu, Cuban, jazz, soul and funky beats into a unique personal style that bursts with vitality. Born in the Congo, near Pointe-Noire, he became his country's most popular drummer before moving to Paris, where he played with a number of international stars. Since 1985 he has performed in clubs and festivals at the head of his big band, with which he recently made a recording, *Gueule de Black*.

■ **You play several instruments—bass, piano, guitar, the drums, African drums and the marimba. Do you identify with any particular one?**

Rido Bayonne: No, they all give me something. I have a different relationship with each one. But it was through playing the bass that I became well known.

■ **Your music has a strong beat. When you compose, do you start with the beat, the harmony, the melody or the structure?**

R. B.: The beat. Because rhythm is life's motor. Heartbeats, breathing and all sounds are rhythm, even the silence that goes with them. In this sense you can say that everybody makes music without realizing it. But don't forget that in Africa the drum is the basic instrument. In any case, my music is always changing, and I never play my pieces the same way twice.

■ **Where do you get your inspiration from?**

R. B.: From many sources, but the most important thing is that I have to feel emotionally involved. If I'm not, I can't compose. I am very receptive to what goes on around me . . . a conversation, a crying child or even sounds like the clinking of forks in a restaurant. Forks striking plates can create rhythm and melody. When you love music, you hear it everywhere!

■ **Your music is also the result of various traditions.**

R. B.: Besides my African cultural background, I've learned from European harmonics and American music, especially James Brown, who has had a big influence on me. But I was born in a cotton field and I first heard the musicians of my village during festivities and the important ritual ceremonies that marked birth, initiation, marriage and death. We spoke French at home, and I had a Western-style education. Cultural intermixing is a tremendous thing. My father had me listen to Franco, a Congolese musician who played a very important part in popular African music, and also to Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, European and American popular music and Cuban music. Several Congolese of my great-grandfather's generation were sold into slavery in Cuba, and my family has always been particularly fond of Cuban music.

■ **Did you always want to be a musician?**

R. B.: Always, despite my father's strong opposition. He didn't think music was a real job. My late mother told me that I was already beating time when I was still in her belly. I am self-taught. As a child I made my own bongos and guitars with the spokes of bicycle wheels. I had no idea how to tune a guitar, but that never stopped me from playing. When I was eighteen I started composing and harmonizing songs. Five years later I earned a bit of money by playing in the Bantu National band in Brazzaville—a well known band that had an excellent saxophone section. Then I played in Cameroon with Manu Dibango*. In the 1960s, to keep my father happy, I studied law for five years. When I finally gave that up to devote myself full-time to music, my father declared war on me, although since then I have often helped my family get by. My brothers, who stayed in the Congo, are having a hard time, even those who are doctors and lawyers, because of the economic situation. Eventually my father came to feel happy about my success and even became proud of me.

■ **What kinds of bands have you played with in France?**

R. B.: At first I played in dance-halls in Lyons, then Paris. There weren't many blacks in France in the 1960s, and people often came to "see" the band because there was a black in it. In fact up till then I didn't even know I was black; I was so caught up in my music that I never realized!

■ **What are you doing at the moment?**

R. B.: I'm studying classical harmony at a conservatory. I'm the oldest in the class. I've got to be humble, because every day I see that it is not musicians who are great, but music. It transcends us. I'm always amazed to see that everything in music that I thought was innate can be taught and learned. Recently I had fun taking sixteen bars of Mozart's *Requiem* and re-harmonizing them, changing the melody and re-orchestrating them for brass, voice, keyboard, piano and drums. You can tell it's Mozart, but it is actually a re-creation. Classical musicians are

afraid to innovate and certainly can't improvise; whereas jazz and pop musicians are a lot freer and more open from that point of view. As far as I'm concerned only Mozart is qualified to play Mozart. But for the past 200 years people have made themselves play and replay his works note for note as if they were preserved in amber. Every musician has a streak of madness. And to get inside yourself and find this streak of madness and your own voice, you've got to be possessed. I like Mozart's madness. He took his obsessions to their very limit.

■ **Your record *Gueule de Black* was recorded at a concert in Bayonne.**

R. B.: Yes, in 1995 an old dream of mine came true. I'd long wanted to see the city of Bayonne, and it was a revelation to me. My family name, Bayonne, originated with a Basque sailor who settled in the Congo long ago and had children he named after his home town. So I've got Basque ancestors. Bayonne is a great town with old buildings that have been very well preserved. I gave an open-air concert at a town celebration, and everyone there welcomed me with open arms. It was incredible. That same year I turned fifty. It was an opportunity to bring together dozens of French-speaking musicians from all sorts of backgrounds. I am a happy man. Music still gives me all I could ever hope for. ■

* See the interview with Manu Dibango in the *Unesco Courier* ("A world of music", March 1991)— Editor.

letters to the editor

WORDS AND DEEDS

I have been a subscriber to the *Courier* for several years and each month I read with great interest Mr. Federico Mayor's "Commentary" column, which expresses in straightforward terms ideas with which I very broadly agree. In the December 1995 issue ("Troglodytes, a hidden world") Mr. Mayor wrote that when Unesco speaks of "the need for development with a human face . . . it is merely complying with one of its basic precepts: the duty to act as the conscience of the United Nations system". I feel that the UN doesn't often listen to the voice of its conscience, that behind a façade of good intentions its different organs and institutions too often seem to act on behalf of a minority of rich and powerful countries that increasingly exploit the rest of the world. I also feel that, instead of really working to construct a better world, institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization are playing into the hands of the rich nations and financiers centred in the Clubs of Paris and London. I was not convinced by what Mr. Ismail Serageldin said in his interview with the *Courier* (June 1996) about the World Bank's activities on behalf of the poor countries, since there is widespread agreement that the inequalities between poor and rich are steadily growing.

I heartily approve of Unesco's goals in the field of social development as expressed on pages 30 and 31 of your March 1995 issue ("Development, the haves and the have-nots"). But how can those who possess the necessary political and economic clout be persuaded to take the decisions needed to achieve those goals? To my mind, the main political players have no desire to change things. How can nations be made to respect the commitments they make at international meetings? Ought not some aspects of the workings of international organizations be reviewed in the interests of more effective democracy and greater justice?

Mr. Mayor also rightly condemns violence and intolerance. I believe that the first and most serious type of violence is the institutional violence of public institutions and states which, sometimes under the cover of democracy and liberalism, create ▶

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injustices, inequalities and inhuman living conditions. Would it not be possible for Unesco and the *Unesco Courier* to denounce more openly the institutions, states and organs of economic and financial power that are leading humanity towards such a problematic future?

Bernard Lucas
Aigrefeuille-sur-Maine (France)

VORACIOUS MEGA-CITIES

After reading Mr. Federico Mayor's column devoted to "The city, environment and culture" in your May 1996 issue ("Silence") I should like to make the following comments. I have spent thirty-five years of my life working on town and country planning in France and elsewhere, and my analysis of the reasons for the rise of mega-cities differs from that put forward by Mr. Mayor. In my opinion these cities are the result of a total lack of town and country planning policy, a total lack of co-ordinated development policy, and excessive economic laissez-faire which is detrimental to the organization of human needs into a hierarchy and to their fulfillment.

Observation reveals that every city has a "zone of attraction" of which it is the centre because of its administrative, commercial, educational, sanitary and cultural facilities. Mega-cities are monsters that devour their environment. If a branch of education is ever devoted to urban living, it should teach that an economy based on maximum profit should be replaced by one based on an organized hierarchy of needs, that a market economy should be replaced by one based on service, and that megalomania and individualistic gigantism should be replaced by respect for the human dimension and co-operation within the community.

Robert Caillot
Lyons (France)

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

There was an error in the article about Colonia del Sacramento published in your January 1997 issue ("Helping the poor to help themselves"). While it is true that Admiral William Brown is acclaimed in Uruguay for his role in the struggle waged by Latin American countries against the shackles of colonialism, he was actually in the service of Argentina, where he is regarded as the founder of the Argentine navy. It was another Irishman, Pedro Campbell, who distinguished himself in Uruguay's struggle for independence by fighting under the banner of General José Artigas and became a Uruguayan national hero.

Victor N. Dodino
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OVERLOOKED!

The February 1997 issue of the *Unesco Courier* devoted to radio ("Radio, a future for sound") made interesting reading, but I was disappointed that there was no mention of Slovenian broadcasting in the selective list of key dates compiled by Prof. Bernard Blin.

Here are a few dates to fill this gap:

1924: Marij Osana makes an experimental radio broadcast with a transmitter made by himself.

1926: The first experimental radio broadcast of a concert is made in Ljubljana.

1941: Seven months after the destruction of the Radio-Ljubljana station by the German air force, the Slovenian Liberation Front founds a clandestine station called *Kricac* ("The Yeller").

1944: Radio Liberation Front is founded in the liberated territory of Bela Krajina.

1946: Creation of the Slovenian Radio Board.

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THE UNESCO COURIER AND Nikon

announce an

international photo competition

on the theme of

Peace in everyday life

THE THEME:

The theme of the competition, inspired by the Preamble to UNESCO's Constitution, is peace in the down-to-earth context of everyday life.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY:

The competition is open to professional photographers in all parts of the world. Contestants are requested to constitute a portfolio of up to twenty black and white or colour prints of their work on the theme "Peace in everyday life", and send it in with a completed entry form. The portfolios must reach the *UNESCO Courier* offices by

15 July 1997.

THE JURY:

An international jury will meet in Paris and choose the winning entry from among 120 portfolios short-listed by a preselection committee. Short-listing and jury deliberations will take place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

A "*UNESCO Courier*- Nikon Prize" of

50,000 French francs

will be awarded to the winning entry. Prize-winning photos will be published in the *UNESCO Courier*.

For further information, contact:
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THEME OF THE NEXT ISSUE:

PEOPLE AND LANDSCAPE

INTERVIEW WITH:

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE

HERITAGE:

THE ISLAND OF MOZAMBIQUE

ENVIRONMENT:

CHINESE AND JAPANESE GARDENS